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# child welfare

*November 1959*

Cultural Factors in  
Child Welfare Work

Workers' Decisions in  
Foster Home Finding

Preserving Family Ties

Highlights of the  
Foster Care Project: Part III

# CHILD WELFARE

JOURNAL OF THE  
CHILD WELFARE LEAGUE OF AMERICA, Inc.

HENRIETTA L. GORDON, Editor

CHILD WELFARE is a forum for discussion in print of child welfare problems and the programs and skills needed to solve them. Endorsement does not necessarily go with the printing of opinions expressed over a signature.

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# CULTURAL FACTORS IN CHILD WELFARE WORK\*†

Otto Pollak

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*Some impressions about the "culture of social workers" in child-placing agencies and the cultural attitudes toward placement found in a few client groups.*

THE ACCEPTANCE of sociologists as resource persons by the helping professions has had some unexpected results. Invited into social agencies and hospitals, they were expected to know or to find out things about the clients and patients which the practitioners could utilize in performing the helping task. Some lived up to this expectation and some at least accepted the function. Others, however, proved to be less compulsive about implied or expressed task assignments and began to look at the professional helpers themselves as worthy objects of study. Social workers and psychiatrists, trained to consider their own feelings and reactions, found little difficulty in coming to terms with this redefinition of function on the part of the social scientists whom they had invited. As a matter of fact, they seem to have welcomed it for a number of reasons.

First, it removed part of the competitive tension which the addition of the representative of still another discipline always implies in interdisciplinary work. From a potential member of the clinical team the social scientist became a student of the helping professions. Secondly, it probably satisfied to some degree the quest for professional identity which the members of newer professions must pursue. Furthermore, it lifted thinking about the feelings and reactions of the practitioners from the context of pathology and put it into a context of culture, i.e. of normality. And finally, it permitted the practitioners to voice discomforts about their own

and allied professions, which in another frame of reference they might have found difficult to express.

## *Client and Professional Sub-cultures*

This liaison between social science and social practice has produced two areas of information about culture: information about the sub-cultures of the client groups which appear most frequently in our social agencies or hospitals, and information about the professional sub-cultures which distinguish social workers, psychiatrists and nurses from members of the wider community and from one another. Both categories of knowledge are interesting from the viewpoint of basic science. Even if it appeared initially to the researchers and the practitioners that the professional cultures were of lesser relevance to practice than the cultures of the clients, closer analysis reveals that the two categories cannot be so separated. Ultimately every helping process must become a process of acculturation between the client and the professional helper, if it is to succeed; and this puts upon the professional person the burden of cultural self-awareness as well as understanding of the client culture.

Where the service is supported by the community, the practitioner will need to understand also the culture of the policy makers, the donors and the taxpayers. Only if he can work thus in both directions, communicating his knowledge and social values to the supporters as well as to the recipients of the service, can he hope to create the therapeutically minded society of which he is ground breaker as well as architect.

The mechanics of these acculturation processes in child welfare work present a great challenge to both social scientists and social practitioners. I believe that they can be worked out only in interdisciplinary seminars

\* Presented at the CWLA Midwest Regional Conference, Chicago, March 12, 13 and 14th, 1959.

† The writer takes pleasure in expressing his gratitude to Dr. Elizabeth A. Lawder, Executive Director, and Mrs. Jeanne C. Pollock, Associate Director of Children's Aid Society of Pennsylvania for their extensive and generous help in guiding him to pertinent material and for their patience in listening to his first attempts of formulation. Without their assistance this paper could not have been written.

and in practice testing. Certainly they have not yet been clarified sufficiently to permit them to be summarized in a single paper resulting from the mental effort of only one person. All that I can offer at the moment are a few impressions about the culture of social workers who operate in child-placing agencies and about the cultural attitudes toward child placement which might be found in a few client groups. These impressions must be analyzed and tested by child welfare workers themselves in the course of theory building and practice.

### **Preference for Child's Own Family**

The first impression which a social scientist is likely to gain from the professional literature of child welfare work is that it is an unenviable task. The policy makers and spokesmen of the profession seem to believe that optimism about the outcome of child development is justified only if a child can be reared within his own parental family. Having to arrange for placement is, therefore, a last resort activity, emergency and patch-up work at best. Compared with the family caseworker's job of trying to help people to get more out of family life than they have been able to unaided, child placement is seen as social rescue work in situations of more or less hopeless inadequacy or catastrophe. Neither foster home care nor institutional protection is considered a truly adequate substitute for a sound family life.

This belief system finds its expression in homemaker service. For instance, in a paper recently published in *CHILD WELFARE*, we find the following statement: "Caseworkers know that a child is always better off in his own home if he can be given the necessary care."<sup>1</sup> And Esther Glickman starts the preface of her authoritative book on child placement with these opening sentences:

"The separation of child from parent is perhaps the most tragic occurrence in a child's life. Its unfavorable aftereffects are usually irreversible

despite the sometimes successful experience of being reared by substitute parents."<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps the sharpest expression of this belief system is found in the Statement of Basic Principles of the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare Affecting Children and Services for Them:

"The Department believes that every child has the right and need to grow up in the protection of his own home, loved and guided by his own parents and that the best foster care never takes the place of the child's own home. Therefore, only compelling reasons justify voluntary placement of any child and only a court may remove a child from his parents' custody against their wishes. During placement, agencies and institutions have the dual obligation of encouraging the maintenance of ties between parents and children and of helping parents to reestablish their home as soon as possible."<sup>3</sup>

This strong belief in the superiority of the child's own biological family over all other possible arrangements has received special support from the studies and statements of two such colorful psychiatrists as René A. Spitz and John Bowlby. The movie *Grief*, which dramatizes the researches of the former, and the latter's original statements about the lifetime effect of separation from parents during childhood in *Maternal Care and Mental Health*<sup>4</sup> have had so powerful an impact on mental health thinking in this country that it is little short of miraculous to find child-placement workers able and courageous enough to perform their function.

### **The Importance of Practice Experience**

One cannot help gaining the impression that practice experience must yield another and more doubtful impression of the mental health potential of many biological families and institutions than these authorities, or the pronouncements of policy makers, would suggest. Apparently, the further one is away from child-placement practice, the easier

<sup>2</sup> Esther Glickman, *Child Placement Through Clinically Oriented Casework*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1957, p. v.

<sup>3</sup> *Regulations Manual*, Office for Children and Youth, Pennsylvania DPW, Section 041.

<sup>4</sup> John Bowlby, *Maternal Care and Mental Health*, W.H.O. Monograph No. 2.

<sup>1</sup> Tracey C. Clough and Janet C. Wood, "Homemaker Service To Children in a Multiple-Function Agency," *CHILD WELFARE*, December 1958, p. 2.



does it become to idealize family life. If this is so, it would seem that practitioners ought to communicate their experiences to theoreticians and policy makers more forcefully than they have done in the past. In doing so they might help children who need placement to the freedom from mental conflict which continued contact with the biological parents is likely to prevent. Research now being carried on by the Children's Aid Society of Philadelphia and the Bryn Mawr Graduate Department of Social Work and Social Research suggests that a series of changes in foster care placement are not as anxiety creating as the contacts with inadequate and disturbed parents which our family-idealizing policies force upon children in placement.

If placement workers could communicate to legislators and department of welfare officials that, in practice, placement may be frequently a blessing rather than a minor curse, it might be possible also to bring about a change in policies which by financial support force families into staying together against the mental health needs of both parents and children. In a paper as yet unpublished, Dr. John A. Rose, Director of the Philadelphia Child Guidance Clinic, has pointed out that:

"... in the past a family which could muster no responsibility would inevitably have broken apart and the children brought to public care. . . . Today, however, we have a paradoxical situation in which constructively aimed social service programs inhibit this tendency and maintain the physical integrity of a family which is in destructive interaction and which becomes more serious and ultimately cannot be prevented from erupting in various forms.<sup>5</sup>

Besides the mental health gains which such an abandonment of the "last resort" philosophy of child welfare work might bring about, the communication of practice experiences to theoreticians and policy makers may also help the child welfare practitioners. Frequently, the relationship between theory

and practice is viewed along the lines of the following functional and structural stereotype. Theoreticians explore and formulate; practitioners apply what the theoreticians have found and said. This implies a status differential which deprives the practitioner of creativity in the helping task and of spontaneity in increasing the understanding which underlies our helping efforts. In the last analysis, it implies that doing is a lesser function than thinking or administering. Nobody's mental health, however, is improved by acquiescence to the assignment of a "lesser task." Also, it leads to the temptation for the practitioner simply to violate policy or disregard theory without bringing his disagreement, and the practice experiences on which it is based, out in the open.

There is no justification for this value judgment. The relationship between theory and practice is not a one way passage. Theory and policy formulation need practice as a source of data as well as a check upon conclusions, and perhaps most of all as a source of stimulation. To give these benefits, however, practice must be self-assertive rather than rebellious in a *sub rosa* fashion. If this two-way passage between child-placement experience and theory had been more clearly perceived in the past, it might well have been possible to protect Dr. Bowlby against making those statements in his influential work which in 1956 he felt he had to correct, and then in 1958 to restore to some degree because practitioners in their relief overinterpreted the intention of his first correction.<sup>6</sup>

### **Preference for the Substitute Family**

A second impression which the social scientist reading the child welfare literature

<sup>6</sup> John Bowlby, Letter to the Editor of *Child Care*, reprinted in *CHILD WELFARE*, November 1958, pp. 32-33.

*Editor's Note:* Dr. Bowlby's letter states: "Were I now to prepare a revised edition of *Maternal Care and Mental Health* . . . though the picture would appear more complex and the emphasis vary . . . the overall pattern I believe would look much the same . . . the object of this letter is not to persuade sceptics of the correctness of these views but to discourage any one from supposing that I have changed my position in any material way."

<sup>5</sup> John A. Rose, *The Emotional Deprivation Cycle and Social Progress*, mimeographed, Child Guidance Clinic, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

is likely to get is that the profession seems to prefer adoptive care to foster family care and foster care to institutional placement. A recently published statement by Bernice Boehm presents the professional position on adoptive versus foster homes with admirable clarity:

"There has been a growing concern in the field of child welfare for the large number of children for whom foster care has become a permanent way of life. . . . Because of conviction about the importance of providing each child with a home and family of his own, social workers have attempted many new and unfamiliar patterns of adoptive placement, expanding adoption opportunities for an ever-widening group of children."

As to the preference for foster homes over institutions a statement of Esther Glickman may be quoted:

"There is at present room for bias in the controversial area of family versus institutional care in a number of cases which do not indicate with certainty a clear decision as to which the child needs most. This writer admits to a current conviction that all known skills must be tried out and further developed in the direction of using substitute family care to serve the needs of the disturbed child. This bias is based on the mental hygiene principle that family structure is the source of sound personality development in our culture."<sup>7</sup>

Underlying all these preferences seems to be the professional hope that for a child in need of placement a substitute for his own family can be found. Actually the term *substitute family* appears to have become part of the professional language of child welfare workers. Here we have a strange situation in which the working concepts of a profession, whose practical experience frequently suggests the opposite, are invaded by general American beliefs about the possibility of mastering nature. Actually, the adoptive family is a legal construct and the foster family a boarding arrangement. If the word

"substitute" has the connotation of equivalence, I am afraid the substitute family is a social work fiction, because the biological family is unique. This misconception deserves analysis, because it seems to affect the selection of adoptive and foster parents to a degree which might well be a heavy burden on the profession and a point of friction between it and the community.

### **What Parents Need from Children**

Let us clear away some emotional brushwork and face the nakedness of reality. One of the characteristics of organic life is self-perpetuation. This an adoption cannot provide, except indirectly by helping the adoptive mother to conceive (if there is reality to the often assumed causal connection). But at least an adoption provides permanence of association between the adopting couple and a child on an inter-generational basis and rights and obligations approximating those of a biological family. Foster family arrangements do not provide even that. They are in essence economic arrangements for room and board as well as some child rearing.

Disconcerting as this may be, neither arrangement can provide the essence of a normal family experience, which in the last analysis is immortality, or at least liberation from the destiny of irrevocably coming to an end in one's own generation. Many parents, when asked about what their children do for them, have no better answer than a statement to the effect that the children's very existence is their contribution to the parents. In a deeper sense this is dynamically as well as biologically true. The children are the ultimate allies in the human being's struggle with death. Thus it follows that no adoptive parent can get this type of contribution from the adopted child, whether he is consciously aware of it or not. With foster parents the situation is so fantastically different from real family life that the very term must be considered a misnomer. It must be said emphatically that "foster parents" are not parents.

I think a great deal of confusion has arisen from our tendency to consider the parent-

<sup>7</sup> Bernice Boehm, "Deterrents to the Adoption of Children in Foster Care," *CHILD WELFARE*, July 1958, p. 20.

<sup>8</sup> Esther Glickman, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

child relationship as one in which only parents have to give something. What parents have to give, adoptive parents and maybe even foster parents could theoretically provide. What children have to give—biological perpetuation—neither adoptive nor foster child can provide. With reciprocity in the essentials thus out of the question, we might well wonder whether we can expect from adoptive and foster parents what we expect from biological parents.

Because of the ambivalence we experienced in our own childhood, we all want to see the child placed with what would be our dream parents. This in itself makes selection very difficult. We consciously or unconsciously find it exceedingly difficult to reject applicants, who are offering to be good parents. On the other hand, looking upon these arrangements as substitutes, we measure their adequacy against some pattern taken from the real thing, and this must of necessity bias us against them.

Thus the professional child welfare worker finds himself on the horns of a dilemma. With his own wish for a better parent he welcomes what seems to be an offer of parenthood. With his yardstick of life in a biologically based family, however, he finds few that will measure up.

I should like to propose to the profession that adoption and foster home care be thought of as alternatives to being reared in one's own family. Alternatives have to be assessed against some standard of effectiveness, but not against proximity to a pattern of life which they, by definition, cannot produce.

### ***The "Elastic" Family***

With regard to the preferability of an adoptive over a foster home, the possibility of a culture conflict between the professional belief system and that of certain client groups deserves attention. Alfred Kadushin, in a recent paper, raised the question whether the profession would not have to "reassess the 'respectability' of long range boarding

home care for hard to place children," and have to accept the idea "that the economic level of the Negro and Indian . . . allows them to be subsidized foster parents but not unsubsidized adoptive parents."<sup>9</sup>

This points up a cultural differential between profession and client group on which social science may be able to elaborate. Franklin Frazier, who has written the standard sociological work on the Negro family in the United States, long ago pointed out that the matriarchal family of the rural South has an elastic membership, described as variable and casual.<sup>10</sup> There is also a certain dilution of mother functions due to economic necessity. Where women are the primary and only stable breadwinners, their employment outside the home leads to the assumption of maternal functions by grandmothers or women in the neighborhood or on the block. Some children talk of having two or three mothers. In a group with such a family structure, children need not be adopted; they are absorbed. And the worker who, on the basis of a school referral or court intervention, tries to work with the illegitimate mother toward an adoption assumes a social need which for the clients does not exist. Thus they break appointments, resist legal hearings and are generally uncooperative.

This is not to say that social workers should or may adopt this viewpoint. But they must take into account this cultural orientation of the client, and must find the cultural value in the client group through which the practitioner has to connect, if he is to help the client accept the desirability of adoption. Such a cultural value would be class centered more than child-development centered. Being almost insuperably hemmed in, without opportunity for inter-group contacts, the Negro's hopes can at present find some reality outlet only in moving upward within the class structure of his own group.

<sup>9</sup> Alfred Kadushin, "The Legally Adoptable, Unadopted Child," *CHILD WELFARE*, December 1958, p. 25.

<sup>10</sup> Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Family in the United States*, Dryden Press, 1948, p. 113.

One vehicle of this striving is conformity with middle class standards. Since the Negro middle class believes in the value of adoption for children, I believe that putting the question of adoption in this frame of reference would have more chance of success than any approach stressing child development as such. Adoption as a measure for social improvement for mother and child may ring a truer emotional bell than any discussion of mental health needs of the child.

Dilution of the maternal experience is likely to be encountered also among Puerto Ricans, who represent an increasingly numerous client group on the eastern seaboard. Among the Puerto Rican small farmers we find the institution of co-madres (ritual co-mothers), who function at times of confinement and generally step into the mother's role during an emergency. Among the landless sugar workers the community again plays a more important role in bringing up children than it does in the USA. A child may visit several houses in the course of a day—perhaps his godmother's, his aunt's, his grandmother's and a neighbor's—and will be received as in his own home, he may be fed but may also be expected to run errands. The extent and quality of the social relations in this community rob the parent-child relationship of the unique intensity that it has in other cultural settings.<sup>11</sup> In consequence many Puerto Ricans consider it a normal arrangement to have a child grow up with a relative. Placement requests from them cannot be considered necessarily as parental rejection or an expression of a psychological lack of ability for child-rearing.

### **Positive View of Institutions**

Also connected with the culture of Latin American people, but not confined to them, is a positive attitude toward placing children in institutions. The Church offers it, and it opens up for children opportunities for a better education and more consistent moral

training than the parental home is frequently thought able to provide. Parents who want the best for their children will strive for a chance to give them such opportunities, and nothing is further from their thought and probably also their emotions than parental rejection. Here again a challenge presents itself for acculturation between client and child welfare worker, for which the first prerequisite is that the latter be sensitized to the possibility of positive paternal feelings as a basis for a placement request.

Finally, I should like to point out that separation of children from their parents in moderate but increasing dosages is part and parcel of the American way of life. It might be useful to point out that the American family in general is self-liquidating,<sup>12</sup> and that our children go through a series of ever-increasing experiences of separation from their parents.<sup>13</sup> This experience seems to begin earlier and earlier. From grade school the separation experience for a number of hours a day was pushed back to kindergarten, from kindergarten to nursery school, and in many cases where mothers work it now begins in day-care centers. I do not mean to propose an essential sameness between these separations and the separation experienced in child placement. I mention them, rather, to claim a measure of cultural realism in my evaluation of the separation brought about by child placement.

Child placement in our culture may well have to be considered an alternative among child-rearing possibilities rather than a regrettable substitute. Whether and how much child welfare practice and individual child development will profit from such a reorientation remains a task for testing and evaluation.

<sup>12</sup> Otto Pollak, "Family Situations and Child Development," *Children*, September-October 1957, p. 170.

<sup>13</sup> William Caudill, *Effects of Social and Cultural Systems In Reactions To Stress*, Social Science Research Council Pamphlet No. 14, June 1958, p. 17.

<sup>11</sup> Kathleen L. Wolf, "Growing Up and Its Price in Three Puerto Rican Subcultures," *Psychiatry*, Vol. 15, 1952, pp. 401-433.

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## COMMENTS\*

### A SOCIAL WORKER'S REACTIONS UPON READING DR. POLLAK'S PAPER

Rosa Wessel

University of Pennsylvania  
School of Social Work  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

I CAN THINK of no better opening for a social worker's response to Dr. Pollak's article than his own reminder that the sociologist is the "stranger within our gates" and at our own invitation. Having freed himself of the compulsion of meeting our expressed need of him, he is now intent upon a mission of his own devising which is of greater interest to him. I shall rephrase his opening words, however, in order to emphasize the meaning of the original request, for I believe that if he had properly valued it, he would not have become as confused about our so-different "subculture" as his article reveals him to be.

In the brief half century of social work's emergence as a profession, one of its distinctive characteristics has been its eager search for knowledge, from whatever promising source, about societies and people, individually and in groups—knowledge that would have "relevant applicability."<sup>1</sup> For social work, as a profession, is by definition undeniably task-oriented. Our own particular area of knowledge is in a sense derivative even while it is unique. We do not ask of other disciplines that they give us knowledge about the nature of our own method or process. We do ask them to help us assemble knowledge about both inner man and his outward circumstances, which will illuminate the nature of the "stuff" with which we work, and will give us a perspective on mankind's history to help us act in the here and now of our accepted task without undue impatience or despair—and, it is hoped, with faith in man's perfectibility.

#### **Building Professional Knowledge**

Social work has frequently become so preoccupied in this search for knowledge that

\* Another set of Comments, by Elizabeth G. Meier, will appear in the December issue.

<sup>1</sup> I quote these words from a speech by Karl de Schweinitz which will soon be published—"The Past as Guide to the Function and Pattern of Social Work."

it could well appear to the sociologist that we believe that "doing is a lesser function than thinking." However, this belief, as anyone in the field of education for social work can testify, is much more likely to represent the value judgment of the academic culture than that of the professional social worker. But since social scientist and social worker belong to the functional complex of the same overall culture, we share some of the same fetishes. Without doubt, the social worker has overvalued knowledge, as if it were a body of universal truth in the possession of other disciplines; and he has not sufficiently identified the distinctive knowledge which is implicit in his activity.

I am indebted to an eminent European sociologist, Werner Stark, for a new understanding of the meaning of knowledge, which, far from downgrading the social worker's activity, conceives of it as a primary source of valuable knowledge.<sup>2</sup> Knowledge, he states, is a "Conscious selection and ordering of fact seen through a grid of values."<sup>3</sup> In building a body of knowledge, the social worker and social scientist have in common the task not only of grasping the pre-existent data but of imputing meaning to them. This is especially difficult because we work with moving facts, "seen as if from a running train."<sup>4</sup> We would have greater humility in relation to each other's different views of what is true if we kept in mind that what we observe and how we interpret what we observe are aspects of our own "subcultures," and that the very categories in which we discuss our observations reflect these societies.

When, therefore, Dr. Pollak so candidly reveals his puzzlement about what he finds in our records and in our writing—not only

<sup>2</sup> Werner Stark, *The Sociology of Knowledge*, The Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois, 1958.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 179.

questions of methodology but of symbol and assumptions and, essentially, of purpose—he serves us well. For we are required to ask ourselves what we have neglected to say, or have said so unintelligibly, that a sociologist is left with contradictory misconceptions about what it is we believe and are therefore attempting to do. Why do we find him, as it appears from our side of the “grid,” tilting at windmills which he himself has erected?

### **The Purpose of Child Placement**

It is regrettable that he did not have access to the definitive statement of the Child Welfare League on “Values, Assumptions and Concepts Underlying the Revised Standards for Foster Family Care Service.”<sup>5</sup> It answers with particular felicity much of his perplexity about the purpose of child placement in our society; it should dispel his fear that the social worker has a naive intention of replacing a child’s biological family. On the contrary, social work values it as the indisputably irreplaceable primary source of the child’s being and identity.

The League’s statement conveys the child welfare worker’s reaffirmation of a belief, increasingly strengthened by evidence from social work practice as well as from other disciplines, in the desirability of a child’s growing up in a home with his own parents. Dr. Pollak will find that there has been no significant change in what he calls “this strong belief in the superiority of the child’s own biological family over all other possible arrangements for his best chance of healthy growth.” From this derives social work’s purpose in “helping parents fulfill the parental role to the best of their ability.”<sup>6</sup>

This “strong belief” is, however, not dogmatically expressed in the League statement, which accepts a professional responsibility for making professional judgments of “better or worse,” according to a professional standard of what is *good enough* or can be helped *to become* good enough for the child: “Our

judgments of a parent’s ability to meet dependency and growth needs of a child, or of a foster family’s suitability, will depend on what we judge to be favorable conditions and opportunities.”<sup>7</sup> Any protective service worker can give moving testimony to the shocking problems which some “biological parents” present in the care of their children. Yet we know that skilled help is often most effective in salvaging these homes for children by helping *biological* parents take on *psychological parenthood*, which is really the heart of the matter. For nature provides only the materials for parenthood, which man himself must choose and nurture into being through experiences of self-abnegation and realization of the child’s separateness and his need. And the wonder is that so many “delinquent” parents do accept help in choosing this more austere but more satisfying way of life.

Nor is child placement as cruelly and stupidly inflexible in its policies about children’s contacts with their parents as Dr. Pollak fears. If some agencies do indeed “force contacts with inadequate and disturbed parents upon children,” such regrettable practice is not in conformity with any authoritative pronouncement of policy from the “theory creators” of the field. Indeed, the League statement clearly recommends the extreme of termination of parental rights, through court procedure, when necessary *in the interests of the child*. Child placement workers have found, however, whether in foster care or adoption service, that a child’s concern about his biological parents, or his possible desire to see or to know them, is not necessarily expunged by judicial decree or by an agency’s policy, even when the parent is “inadequate or disturbed,” or even cruel.

### **Foster Family Care “Service”**

One word in particular in the title of the League’s statement could I believe, throw fresh light upon child placement for someone from another discipline: The word is *service*. What a social agency provides for a child is

<sup>5</sup> Zitha R. Turitz, *CHILD WELFARE*, May 1959, pp. 8-15.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

not merely a foster home or a foster family—not as substitute nor as alternative—but a *foster family care service*. When this concept is adequately understood, child placement can be viewed as a professional service *sui generis*, one of the creative professional developments of the last twenty-five years.

Foster parenthood is of ancient lineage, not invented by social work. It was encouraged as a form of justice among human beings in the Sumerian codes five thousand years before Christ. Fifteen hundred years before Christ an Egyptian nobleman had inscribed on his tomb, "I was a father to the orphan." Social work has appropriated this long established form of human concern and has developed it into a new form of living experience for that child who cannot or should not remain with his own parents.

When this service is offered with professional skill, based in the child placement agency, neither foster parents nor children will confuse it with an "own home" and "own parents." But the provocations and temptations for all of the participants in this peculiar tripartite constellation—child, foster parents and own parents—are not to be denied. Indeed, they form the very content of the placement worker's activity with all of them. The foster parents who prefer the foster child to use their name instead of his own at school, or the child who phantasies about being an "own child" in the foster home in denial of his own grievously felt loss, are only gross examples of the infinite variety of the human predicament which may attend child placement.

The very fact that such help is a social work service precludes any danger of its being offered by a social worker as a competitive "mastery of nature." Stark's words are most appropriate here: "A human society is not under the laws of nature but under its own laws."<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, it is the child himself who often uses foster placement to "master nature," to find the inner strength to meet and grow through the crises of forced

separation from his vital ties, however negative or sundered these ties may have been.

### **Handling Painful Aspects of Placement**

The daily "grass roots" experiences of child placement workers have substantiated the social worker's assumptions about the unique psychological growth values of such foster family care service. The sociologist, contemplating this service from his own vantage point, sees only its truly painful and difficult aspects, so that to him it seems like "an unenviable task." He speaks neither authentically nor authoritatively for social work when he so emphatically concludes that "having to arrange for placement is *therefore* a last resort activity, emergency and patch-up work *at best*." (The italics are mine.)

To any teacher or supervisor of social work practice, these feeling-laden words have a familiar ring. So also do his conjectures about the difficulties to be encountered in selecting people to carry the complex role of foster parents for an agency. These are the words we hear from the beginning student who is shocked by the necessity for making judgments which are decisive for the well being of a child, especially of a child who has already sustained a deep wound. These troubled feelings are the very content of the student social worker's learning. In the process of becoming professional he learns to claim and to value his own reactions, especially his doubts and fears, as they are stirred up by his function—and thus he learns to distinguish between what is *his* feeling and what is the other person's reality, both inner and outer.

We appreciate well, and we value, the human vulnerability which the sociologist reveals as he discusses the possible difficulty in finding "parents who are good enough for us," but he imputes an unwarranted universality to the form of difficulty he identifies. Here the sociologist has slipped out of his own role and now speaks of "we," as if he too were a social worker, faced with the social worker's necessity for decision and action. Admittedly, the selection of foster parents

<sup>8</sup> Stark, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

poses many difficulties for the child placement worker, but they do not all spring from a universal repudiation of our own universally not-good-enough parents!

The content of the foster parent selection process must necessarily be anchored to the prospective foster parents' ability and willingness to meet the hard realities incident to giving loving care to the child of other parents, to helping him grow physically and psychologically, with the threat ever present that the other parents are somehow enshrined in his heart, whether in love or in hate. Can these prospective foster parents admit into their home not only a child but also an agency, with its constant reminder that the relationship with this child has its realistic limits and special hazards? The foster parent selection process is fortunately not merely a person-to-person encounter of two individuals, flooded by the child welfare worker's unresolved personal problems, but is related to the child placement agency's role as an instrument for putting into effect some of the values a child holds for our society.

### ***The Essence of Family Experience***

One is tempted to try to present the social worker's point of departure from Dr. Pollak's views page by page, but there seems to be a more fundamental difference between us that makes communication halting. When the sociologist speaks in abstractions, he speaks through a grid of values which is seriously at variance with ours, for abstractions do not adequately comprehend the living, pulsating human relationships within which we operate. "Clear away the emotional brushwork and face the nakedness of reality"? Indeed, an important part of the social worker's reality is the world of emotion, the world of fear, apprehension, hope, dream.

If the naked reality of the sociologist reveals "the essence of family experience in the last analysis" as immortality for the parents, it is so rarified a truth that it has no relevance for our activity. Our values are more earthy, tied to the here and now. The essence of

family experience is comprised of relationships, cross-currents of contradictory feeling, between individuals who are seeking connections and investing them with powerful meaning even while they may be trying to escape the consequences.

"What have children to give beyond perpetuation?" The social worker would answer, "Everything that creative man has developed in human relationships over the years of his emergence as a sentient being." The human child "has to give" to his parents a kind of self-fulfillment which comes from experiences, within relationship, of anxiety and fear, joy and delight, and of the greatest self-discipline known to man.<sup>9</sup> "Reciprocity in the essentials"? Without any sentimentality, anyone who has had experience with children as parent or foster parent must say that in all the *essentials*, the child in our society is more giver than receiver.

### ***The Sociologist's "Reality"***

Dr. Pollak early gives us a clue to what may be at the very center of his problem in reaching us, when he speaks of his interest in social workers as "worthy objects" of his study. He will not learn to know us or our "subculture" from that position! "To be known as object is to be falsely known, is to be severed from one's self and wounded in one's identity."<sup>10</sup> One of the problems with objectivization, as we have already seen, is that it tends toward universalization, which robs us of the unique and singular. For us as social workers, the human personality—adult or child—is of supreme value, and it is here that the "center of gravity" rests for us. It is for the individual that we are concerned in the collective realities with which his fate and his history are linked.

Wineman has stated this same problem of difference between social work knowledge

<sup>9</sup> I commend to all a beautiful photographic depiction of these experiences of true parenthood in *The World is Young*, by Wayne Miller—Ridge Press, New York, 1958.

<sup>10</sup> Jacques Maritain, "The Existent," in *Four Existential Theologians*, Doubleday and Co., New York, 1958, p. 53.



and sociological knowledge in somewhat different terms.<sup>11</sup> Here I have drawn the line between objectivization and universalization on the one side, and human individualization on the other. Wineman draws the line between our (social work's) need for knowledge of the child in his internal life, and the outward social factors which preoccupy social science. Neither realm alone tells the whole story, and our need is not to reconcile them but rather to find a way of relating them properly to each other.

We grant that social workers must continue to become more articulate and conceptual about their practice. Sociologists, however, if they wish to be useful to us, will have to heed the words of a distinguished member of their own discipline, and "move away from a supra rationalism which tends to blind them toward many nonrational values,"<sup>12</sup> values which are realities of an important order in our society. There is, for instance, no way for a social worker to use so lifeless a "naked reality" as Dr. Pollak's designation of the adoption family as a "legal construct" and the foster family as a "boarding arrangement." Neither designation is true to our reality as we work with foster or adoptive homes.

Stark tells us that rational and even disciplined thinking is unavailing for real understanding of another culture. "What is ultimately decisive is that loving willingness to meet the other on his own terms. . . . Otherwise nothing human, whether individual or social, will ever yield its secret to him who searches for it."<sup>13</sup>

### **Social Work's Distinctive Role**

The sociologist must first understand our purpose as social workers before he can help us. As long as he mistakenly conceives of us as the "builders of a therapeutic society," he will speak of children's experiences of separation from their homes as "dosages of cultural

realism." When he comprehends the socially creative "secret" of our "subculture," he will understand why it is offensive to us to speak of a family as a "self-liquidating mechanism," or why his linking the removal of a child from his own home for the reasons which occasion child placement with the normal progressive growth separations in our society seems incredible to us. If, indeed, we should concede that child placement might be considered an "alternative form of child rearing in our society," we would still have to say that it is a "regrettable alternative," which nevertheless has creative possibilities for a child's development, as yet not fully exploited.

Dr. Pollak's paper serves to remind social workers that sociologists have access to much cultural knowledge that is important to us, informative and suggestive, but that if we permit them to build our theory or mold our practice, we are abdicating our distinctive role and running the risk of distorting our social purpose.

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<sup>11</sup> David Wineman, "The Life Space Interview," *Social Work*, January 1959, p. 17.

<sup>12</sup> Stark, *op. cit.*, p. 305.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 306.

# WORKERS' DECISIONS IN FOSTER HOME FINDING\*†

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*This paper reports on research restricted to the ranking decision—that is, the worker's arrangement of foster homes in order of their goodness, and his agreement with other workers about that goodness.*

THE primary goals of the research on the selection of foster parents have been the following:

To find out the bases of workers' decisions to accept or to reject applicant families.

To find out whether these criteria may be used to predict decisions about foster family applicants.

During the course of the research, it became evident that, in order to determine the criteria for selection, it would be necessary to know how consistently foster homes are ranked—that is, do social workers agree on what is a good home and what is a poor one? Thus much of the research was devoted to finding out not only how much agreement exists between workers (and between agencies), but what affects that agreement and what causes disagreement.

## Decision

Before there can be agreement, there must be decision. In the selection of foster homes there are three decisions, which may be simply expressed in the following questions:

Is the home acceptable?

How acceptable is the home?

What child shall be placed in the home?

## Is the Home Acceptable?

Child welfare agencies have a continuous stream of children at their doors—children

\* Based on a paper presented at the Child Welfare League of America Program at the National Conference on Social Welfare, at San Francisco, May 26, 1959. This is a partial report of a study on the Selection of Foster Parents, sponsored by the Child Welfare League of America and supported by a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health. A full report of the study is in preparation.

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who must be served at home, in institutions, or in foster homes. To serve many of them, an agency must keep at its disposal a ready pool of available foster homes, a pool composed of a variety of families whose general capabilities fit them to serve the predominant categories of children coming into agency care. Ideally, every worker selects for the pool only those applicants who ultimately will provide a good foster home for a child in the agency's care.

## How Acceptable is the Home?

The worker then arranges the pool—at least implicitly—on a continuum of goodness, putting the best home first, the "least good" last, and all the other homes in the order of their goodness in between. The second problem of decision now arises, for the worker must establish the cutting point between the acceptable and unacceptable homes—a decision which is quite easy when the agency has many applicants, for the probability is that there will be many good homes among them.

What happens when the number of applicants exceeds the number of needed homes by only a small percentage—or when the number of applicants falls short of the number of needed homes? Then the worker has no choice but to set the cutting point further and further down the continuum. While he has certain criteria of absolute unacceptability to guide him here—for example, a contagious illness, highly undesirable quarters or a highly disturbed foster parent—the worker is nevertheless often forced into precarious decisions. If he cuts too close to the end of the continuum, he runs a high risk of admitting to use some undesirable homes.

Although the last decision, "*what child shall be placed in the home?*" is important, it does not concern this research. When the worker selects a foster home he draws from the pool the home most nearly "matching" the child he wishes to place. Our research problem then is: *How was the home chosen for the pool?*

If workers do not agree about the goodness of a home, then obviously it will be impossible to separate out specific criteria of selection.

It was hypothesized that ranking of homes would be similar in different agencies if the gross populations of children in care were also similar. For this reason, a number of large multi-function child welfare agencies were chosen for the research.<sup>1</sup> Mainly they were public agencies, where the populations of children have a very wide variety of characteristics and where, therefore, the foster home pools include a wide variety of homes. Before proceeding to discuss findings, several premises of the study will be repeated:

Agencies placing children in foster family care must build up a pool of foster homes.

Because of the shortage of applicants, they can reject only a limited number of the poorest homes in developing this pool.

To make the fewest possible errors, workers must learn to rank with a great deal of consistency the homes they study, so as to reject the same kinds of homes in all instances.

Rank ordering should not differ markedly in agencies with similar needs due to the same wide range of characteristics of their children.

### Agreement

Why should workers in different agencies be expected to arrange homes in the order of their goodness and arrive at the same, or substantially the same, ranking? First, workers are subject to similar education. Second,

<sup>1</sup> The author is indebted to the Westchester County (N. Y.) Division of Family and Child Welfare; the Nassau County (N. Y.) Department of Welfare; the Jewish Child Care Association of New York; Sheltering Arms Children's Service, New York City; and to the Alameda County (Calif.) Welfare Commission for their participation in the study.

the literature is essentially in agreement on selective criteria. Third, the supervisory process in the agency leads to consistency within the agency itself, insofar as the individual supervisor spreads his influence over a number of workers. Finally, the ease of transfer from one agency to another suggests that the essential variables by which selection is made are similar, or at least fairly standardized, so that a new worker entering the agency does not require marked retraining.

The problem is to find out how well workers agree about the position of an individual home on some kind of goodness scale. Such agreement, or lack of it, may be measured by a variety of statistical methods. The method used in this research not only permitted expression of the amount of agreement between workers, but also lent itself to a statement of percent of perfect agreement.

Ideally, to study agreement, a panel of workers would study the same home and render independent decisions about it. However, this is neither practically nor theoretically feasible. It is obviously impossible to subject the same family to a barrage of home studies. Theoretically, it is not feasible since the family would undoubtedly undergo marked change in the process of each study—thus the workers would be observing "different" families. Another method would be to record the home study on tape and have judges listen to the recording and make their decisions.<sup>2</sup> This is very time-consuming.

Our method was the use of abstracts of case records, a number of which were developed and submitted to the staffs of the participating agencies. Each worker was asked several things about himself and about the cases he read, and was asked to rank the cases in the order of their goodness as foster homes. These are some of the findings:

#### 1. *Workers who have to make "goodness" decisions in an agency—the homefinders—rank with marked consistency.*

<sup>2</sup> This procedure was followed by Donald Brieland in *An Experimental Study of the Selection of Adoptive Parents at Intake*. (Child Welfare League of America, Inc., N. Y., 1959.)

Such consistency, our measurement tells us, could happen by chance only about once in 10,000 times. In one agency, agreement among homefinders was 83 percent of perfect. And most of the disagreement here was of only one position—where, for instance, one judge ranked a case second and another ranked it third.

2. *Agreement is related to the level of workers' understanding.*

When the staffs of the participating agencies were grouped by level of responsibility within the agency—supervisors, caseworkers, junior caseworkers, students—the amount of agreement varied from group to group. Contrary to expectation, high job level does not necessarily mean good agreement. What does seem to determine agreement is the ability to interpret at the level of interpretation attempted by a given group. Thus, in one agency, the study showed social work students to be very inconsistent, even though they had all had more social work education—and often more experience—than the agency's junior workers, whose reliability was good. It seems possible to view a case and arrive at a decision at various depths of analysis, but attempting deep insight without knowing how to achieve it results in inconsistent rating.

3. *Volume is in almost completely inverse relationship to consistency.*

The more bulk a case contains, the less likely it is that workers will agree on its position on a goodness scale. This was shown in a number of ways.

From certain complete case records, 20, 40, 60, and 80 percent of the informational items were randomly discarded, and the different sets thus created were read and ranked by different, randomly chosen, groups of workers. *Cases containing 40 percent of the informational items produced the highest agreement.* At the same time, the position of each case on the goodness "scale" remained about the same for the 40 and 100 percent cases. This means that the worker perceives essentially the same image of a case, whether he receives only a small proportion of it or the whole

foster home case record. But, most important, by eliminating a substantial amount of bulk—which incidentally also contained information—the consistency of decisions was markedly increased.

4. *While by random sampling of information from a case, as much as 40 percent of the content was required for high agreement, intentional selection of crucial materials led to greater reduction of bulk and simultaneous increase in agreement.*

By selection, it was possible to reduce material to 14 percent of the original items, and at the same time increase agreement to approximately 86 percent of perfect. Again, it is important to emphasize that the workers' perceptions of the goodness of a case did not change substantially from what they were when 100 percent of the material was presented.

Why does reduction of material lead to increased agreement? Consider the process of the home study, which involves the systematic reduction of material:

The worker makes an appointment with the applicant, and this leads to a sample in time. A small piece out of the over-all lifetime of the applicant is chosen, on the basis of which certain inferences will be made. There is sampling when the applicant and the worker meet, be it at home or in the office. They do not discuss everything, but touch only certain selected issues. This might be called a *sample of episodes*. Some of these are retrospective, others are prospective, and others deal with the present. In any event, not everything is discussed.

Further reduction occurs when the worker decides which of the materials are worthy of recording. Undoubtedly, the worker has forgotten some of the interview content. But equally if not more important are his deliberate selections of material. Finally, if this material is submitted to a variety of readers, as is done for a case conference, then again reduction occurs in the selective way in which material is read.



So, the home study may be seen as a process of non-random selection, which leads to focusing upon a number of key episodes in one case. On the basis of these episodes, a prediction is made regarding the family's behavior in a future situation—the foster care of a child. And, judging from findings 3 and 4, only a small number of episodes are needed for a decision.<sup>3</sup>

5. *A grasp of the conceptual issues involved in home study leads to substantial improvement in reliability.*

When judges were provided with the comments of the worker who had done the original home study, agreement among them increased. When long cases, averaging more than ten single-spaced typewritten pages each, were submitted for ranking to a number of child welfare workers, they agreed with each other to approximately 50 percent of perfect. When another group of workers was instructed with a conceptual framework guide and given the same cases to rank, agreement increased to over 80 percent of perfection.<sup>4</sup> Both kinds of improvement occurred in spite of the fact that our framework and the worker's comments each added bulk to the cases.

In summary, the data so far show two things. First, that workers who are trained to make decisions seem to make more consistent decisions—and that this training comes from experience in making decisions and also from a grasp of the concepts used in studying the home. Second, that certain attributes of the materials themselves contribute to agreement.

### Disagreement

Even when the material is reduced, when it is submitted to the most competent judges,

<sup>3</sup> The addition of others can either reinforce the decision or confuse the judge. The data show that it does the latter. As yet, the study reported here has no data on the reinforcing effects of additional material.

<sup>4</sup> At first, a group of workers was briefly instructed in the use of this framework. Their agreement declined, and it became apparent that the training session had been too short; that the framework only added bulk to the cases, and confused the workers. The second group was instructed until the research staff felt certain that the concepts of the guide were clear to every worker.

when key items are chosen and put before the worker, there is still considerably less than perfect agreement. Why is this so? Undoubtedly some of this is pure chance, since so many variables enter here. However, three specific factors were found to lead to inconsistency.

A major cause of disagreement seems to be *time lag*. Agency practices—and the knowledge from which they stem—are put on in layers. In various time periods, certain professional behavior is learned as acceptable, and does not disappear with the acquisition of new ideas and new behavior. There have been changes over a period of time, for example, in what is considered an acceptable motive. This is seen in workers' interpretations of items like the following:

"Mr. and Mrs. Barr prefer foster care as a means of supplementation to Mrs. Barr's going out to work."

Workers with different viewpoints perceived this item differently. Some rated it positive; others, negative. Similar differences in viewpoint appear with regard to appropriate child-rearing practices (which have undergone an immense and almost cyclical change over the past thirty to forty years); to the meaning of individualization; to parental rights; and to the function of a foster home—specifically, its limited responsibility and the attachment to the child. In fact, almost every important variable in a case may be evaluated differently, depending upon the time vantage point from which it is seen. Some workers operate on premises of the past; others base their practice on present-day views.

A second reason for disagreement is the difference in workers' organizational vantage points. Especially crucial here are the differences between homefinders and placement workers. Although there is much agreement between these two groups—that is, homefinders find the kinds of homes placement workers want—there is some disagreement evident in the way material is perceived. For example:

"Younger boy talked of sharing toys with foster child and showing him interesting places in the neighborhood. He has one toy he cherishes. No one, including foster child, can play with this without permission."

This was an item in one of the cases read by homefinders and placement personnel. Homefinders did not pick the item up as important, but five of the seven agency placement supervisors who read the same cases considered it highly important.

This and similar items indicate that homefinders tend to be more theoretically oriented—they consider whether the home would theoretically work out—while the placement workers are concerned with the practical implications of specific behavior.

Similar distinctions exist in the orientation of the homefinders toward the present and of the placement workers toward the future. For example:

"Mrs. Allison knows foster children have parents. She thinks she would find it hard to be close to a child's parents."

This item was picked up by two out of the seven homefinders; all seven of the placement workers considered it important. The problem is not in the present. But the placement worker who looks to work with both parent and foster parent sees in it a potential issue.

A third source of disagreement lies in the essentially idiosyncratic behavior of some workers. Interviews with some of the workers regarding the ranks they had assigned to cases produced, in some instances, such statements as, "Oh, the mother was reared on a farm, and farm girls make good foster mothers," or, "I would be very reluctant to accept as foster parents people who were divorced." These views came through only on occasion, but if they are held by some workers and used in their decision, the result is some lack of consistency.

It appears, with regard to the over-all question of lowered reliability, that the worker who is deprived of a framework

gropes for some guide lines of his own. These he may find in previous practice and previously established appropriate procedures; thus he is fixated at a particular layer of knowledge. Or they may come to him from his own organizational vantage point as homefinder or placement worker. Or, if these will not suffice, they come to him purely from his personal experience, which may lead him to decisions completely out of tune with the agency's position.

### Practice Implications of the Findings

A recent Child Welfare League of America statement on research policy declares that good social work research begins with issues of practice and ends with guides to action.<sup>5</sup> What are some action implications of the findings described above?

1. The key selected materials upon which the workers were able to base reliable decisions (the 14 percent of case material mentioned previously) contained certain items; what did these items mean? If some meaning could be inferred from them, would it not yield the possible beginnings of a conceptual structure which may provide guide lines for home studies?

It is possible, of course, to array such material in various ways. One way of structuring seems to yield five groups of items, pertaining to:

*The goal orientation of the family*—what the family seeks; how capable it is of seeking it; how realistic it is in trying to achieve its goals; what its means are for achieving them.

*The self-image of the parents in the home.* How and how accurately do they perceive themselves?

*Perception and enactment of crucial roles*—the roles of parents, of spouses, of foster parents.

*The extent of cohesion and separability of the family unit.* What is its capacity to let people in, and having them in, to let them out again?

*The extent of reciprocity and flexibility in the family.* How much can it give, how well can it lead, and how well can it follow?

<sup>5</sup> Martin Wolins, *A Proposed Research Program for the Child Welfare League of America*, CWLA, N. Y., May 1959.

Whether one accepts these dimensions or accepts others, it seems clear that some set of dimensions has to be made explicit, for various reasons: to teach students, to train new workers, and to imbue home studies with a measure of consistency.

2. Piling up of many episodes in a case seems unnecessary. The worker might be well advised to pursue several key developments in the family and study them in detail, rather than touching on many issues superficially.

3. With an increase in the clarity of dimensions, the worker should know where, how much, and for what, to probe. This may imply a return to the case study outline.

Restricted and confined by the outlines of long ago, social workers discarded the idea of structure, along with the specific dimensions it imposed. This is *not* to suggest that we go back to the outline of old—to the static, descriptive procedure of home and neighborhood and furnishings. This *is* intended to suggest the desirability of developing an outline which permits the worker some knowledge of dynamics—an outline which he must study in order to produce a consistent and, it is hoped, valid decision.

4. Consistent decisions are made by those people who know what to look for and how to use their findings. If, however, people are taught what to look for but not how to use the information, their consistency declines markedly—and falls substantially below the level of those who know neither the *what* nor the *how*.

If consistency is important, and it seems to be, then this has immediate implications for training of agency personnel.

5. Although the separation of a homefinding unit from the placement unit of an agency does not seem to lead to substantial maladaptation—that is, to the finding of homes that are not usable and the failure to find usable homes—considerable difference in emphasis as to what is important in the home exists between placement and homefinding staffs. This suggests the need to consider rather carefully the separate homefinding unit, and to weigh its administrative advantages against its possible service disadvantages.

6. On the whole, it is quite fair to say that we are not doing badly in the consistency of our professional decisions with regard to the selection of foster homes. However, we still know little, if anything, about the validity of these decisions—except in the limited sense noted earlier. This has definite research implications.

7. Since we have some insight now into the dimensions along which decisions are made, it may be possible to develop a simple interview, the results of which can be used to predict grossly the decisions. Work on such an interview is now under way, and cautious optimism is warranted.

If, by means of a single, short interview, a decision could be made about whether a family is generally acceptable or unacceptable, a number of new research steps can follow. These could relate to:

Ways of bringing into the program families who had not previously applied; specifically, to studies of client incentives and of agency criteria of selection.

A comparison—in the far distant future—of criteria of selection with measures of outcome of foster home placements.

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## EDITORIAL COMMENTS



THESE are the months when campaigns are in progress for raising funds for health, welfare and recreation. Interpretation of these services plays an important part in the success of the campaign. Each agency has an enormously important responsibility for making the interpretation effective; for who knows better why a homemaker, for instance, offers a happier solution in some situations than placing children away from home, why day care is needed and how it serves parents and children, what constitutes good foster home or institutional care, what we need to be truly helpful to unmarried mothers or parents who neglect their children? The agency staff and board are the ones to interpret the changes in practice and goals brought about by deeper understanding.

We have been speaking and writing about social services for many years and yet we find a serious lack of public understanding. Experience and studies show that all too many children do not get the help they need to become healthy, responsible adults—even when we know what they need and such service could be made available. At the same time we have had dramatic evidence that no effort is too great, no financial expenditure too prohibitive, to help a family or a child in distress. The problem must be in communication: How can we tell about families and children in such a way that not only does each child stand out real in his pain, his need and his potential for healthier, happier living, but the quality of the needed service becomes clear.

No matter how intensive the annual appeal for funds may be, interpretation cannot be a once a year project. It must go on all the year round. However, during this period, when the national appeal arouses an increased sense of urgency and greater resources are available for interpretation to the public, we have an opportunity to help the community understand not only what those who need help stand to gain from good service but what the community itself stands to gain. We can help make clear that money

raised through the current United Fund Chest Drives can help close up gaps in service as well as strengthen services now being offered.

Local citizens will soon assume the responsibility for weighing the various needs in their communities to determine how to allocate the funds that have been raised. They too must have help to understand the difference between effective service and wasteful or harmful service. They need to know also how we are failing our children, why the concern about lack of trained staff or insufficient staff, about vested interest in services that have outlived their usefulness, about lacks in knowledge. All of these cause serious shortcomings in social services, the impact of which could be reduced if we had adequate funds.

Those directly responsible for services to children and to their families must therefore now take the time to join forces with the millions of volunteers over the country who are working to raise money. In this way, they can strengthen the efforts to arouse public interest and understanding in support of community health and welfare programs.

H. L. G.

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## PRESERVING FAMILY TIES\*

**Joyce Kirby**

Supervisor, Intake Department  
Jewish Child Care Association of  
New York  
New York City

*A report of an inter-agency project to provide family counseling as an alternative to placement in selected cases.*

MUCH of our current thinking about family life and family breakup evolved at a time when economic pressures and the problems of physical illness of parents precipitated most of the requests for placement that came to our agency, as well as to others in the United States. Obviously, today much of this thinking needs to be modified.

There has been a decrease in the number of children in placement with the Jewish Child Care Association, and simultaneously a great difference in the degree of pathology represented by the behavior of the children and their families. The reason for the numerical decrease of placement for our Jewish population in New York City is that there is no longer a needy immigrant group. The Jewish population is an established part of the community. As with others, its problems now lie mainly in the relationship areas rather than in the areas of physical health, employment, or economic struggle for survival.

Therefore, children now go into placement not so much for economic reasons as because their family ties are not strong and healthy enough to maintain family unity, or because either they or their parents are too disturbed to remain together.

In the light of this picture of emotional illness and inadequacy, the plan to preserve family ties must be qualified. Which family ties is it desirable to preserve, and how can this be done? What additional casework and psychiatric resources do we need? How can we educate our communities to the value of services to prevent breaking up families?

These are questions to which there is no simple answer.

### ***The Tri-Agency Project***

Family breakup is always serious. Although separation may minimize certain problems and may create an atmosphere in which emotional growth and change is possible, the cost to parent and child is bound to be considerable. The programs of day care, of Aid to Dependent Children and of homemaker service have all been developed so that no children should be separated from their families for economic reasons alone, or for other reasons where separation is not in the child's best interest at the time. As the reasons for requests for placement have changed, we have found an increasing need for facilities that would help maintain family unity. Even in a city like New York, which has a relatively good program of counseling and psychiatric care, families often have had difficulty in obtaining these services within a reasonable period of time.

Two placement agencies and one family agency—the Jewish Family Service, the Jewish Child Care Association of New York and the Jewish Youth Services of Brooklyn—with the help of the Greater New York Fund, therefore designed what has been called the Tri-Agency Project. The family agency, Jewish Family Service, agreed to accept for immediate and intensive service a certain number of cases (roughly equal to three case loads) referred by the two placement agencies. In this way a family could be offered a real choice between placement and counseling. While a project of this kind would have validity primarily where the placement agency is separate from the family agency, it might well be considered by

\* Given at the CWLA Eastern Regional Conference, Atlantic City, New Jersey, on February 5, 1959.

multiple-function agencies with separate departments for family and children's services.

The immediate availability of service was unquestionably of great value to the placement agencies. Clients come to consider placement at a point of crisis, and if counseling is not immediately available many cannot sustain themselves through a waiting period. Some might feel impelled toward placement out of the sheer inability to live with their problems while waiting to be seen by the family agency. Even in less extreme situations there is no doubt that once separation has been thought of, a whole chain reaction of guilt and anxiety is started. It is hard for a family to be left alone with these painful feelings.

Another great value of the project was that it undertook to serve families who, because of lack of motivation or degree of pathology, might otherwise not have found their way to the family agency or might not have been accepted for service.

Initially we at Jewish Child Care Association found it difficult to set up standards for evaluating a situation early in the intake process and determining whether the client was sufficiently motivated toward, and might benefit from, help toward maintaining the family as a unit. In the course of this evaluation we learned that our most hopeful cases were considered by the family agency to have a poorer prognosis than their other clients. It requires inner strength to come to any helping agency, whether for placement or for counseling. However, the client who thinks first of family breakup and applies to a placement agency is obviously less optimistic in his assessment of his own and his family's future.

### ***The Kinds of Families Served***

After much trial and error, we finally evolved some criteria for referrals to the project. First and most important, there had to be some degree of wanting to stay together. Although this point sounds obvious, it can present many complications for the caseworker. While it is axiomatic that self-

understanding is vital to the caseworker, dealing with placement and separation is bound to touch off her deepest feelings.<sup>1</sup> Particularly at the point of application, where in a sense the worker is presiding at the separation, at times even the most experienced and sensitive person may react subjectively to the client. If the worker is herself a parent this may create one type of reaction and identification. If she is childless or unmarried, the related frustrations may be aroused by a particular client or situation. An intake worker in a placement agency must therefore try to be particularly clear in separating her own motivation from the client's.

As a second criterion, we had to have some conviction that, at least for the present, a constructive alternative to placement might be possible. This would not mean that we could hold ourselves or the client responsible for the ultimate resolution of the problem.

As a third criterion, at least one parent had to be able to take help, and had to have some ego strength. We felt that both parents did not necessarily have to be treatable, if the one involved with the agency seemed prepared to assume the heavy burden of maintaining family life with little or no help from the marital partner.

Fourth, we believed that the situation should not be so bad for the children that it is undesirable to prolong it. This category also appears fairly obvious, but cannot be dismissed lightly, since here too there is room for the worker's subjective reaction. As part of the constant self-examination required of anyone in a helping profession, we should try to be aware of our feelings about certain social conditions. For example, poor standards of hygiene need not necessarily rule out a home, and parents who are not legally married may still have something positive to offer their children. As caseworkers we do have to make many judgments, and we must often be prepared to tell our judgments to a client or to a community

<sup>1</sup> See Ner Littner, *The Strains and Stresses on the Child Welfare Worker*, CWLA, 1956, \$.60.

agency such as the Children's Court. In arriving at decisions, it is most important that we know the specific situation, and equally imperative that we know ourselves.

Finally, we decided that before referral the client must be seen in the intake department of the placement agency at least twice. We hoped that this would preclude "shopping." Also, it is natural that a client, on first coming to a placement agency, will express uncertainty and anxiety about the step he has taken. It would not be helpful for us to seize on this uncertainty and reinforce it without fuller understanding on our part and on the part of the client.

### ***Helping an Immigrant Family***

Several cases will illustrate different ways in which the project was used helpfully. The first is an economically underprivileged family with very low living standards:

The Fellings were immigrants who had recently come to America, and had settled in New York City in a community of similar recent arrivals who clung to their old customs and made little effort to take on the patterns of their new life. They easily became a part of this ingrown community, concentrated largely on religious observance, and had no concept of how to maintain a household or to bring up children according to American standards.

There was the additional factor of Mrs. Felling's emotional inadequacy, which made her unable to care for five children, all young and closely spaced. After each birth Mrs. Felling verged on a post-partum breakdown. She spoke very little English, and had amazingly little contact with the English-speaking community. Life in general was bewildering to this harrassed and inadequate woman, and life in New York was totally beyond her comprehension. The children were physically and emotionally neglected, and were developing many problems. The school found the older ones to be disturbed and hyperactive, and unkempt and filthy. In the school lunchroom they stood out from the other children because of their complete lack of acceptable eating habits. Mrs. Felling was totally unable to cope with the management of her children or her home.

When the family came to us to discuss placement, Mr. Felling was deeply moved. He had given up everything that he had achieved in Europe, had lost all his material possessions, and had been in a concentration camp where he met his wife. The thought of seeing his family broken up was unbearable to him, although, as the more stable of the two, he was aware that the home was inadequate. He felt that for a man to permit his children to be brought up by others was an admission of total weakness. Also, he feared the loneliness and emptiness of a home without children.

Although there was no doubt that this home was totally inadequate both on the physical and on the emotional level, the worker could not but be impressed by Mr. Felling's pleas that the family be kept together. We therefore referred this case to the project. They embarked upon the most total kind of program, including counseling help and homemaker service. All of this had to be given almost twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week. Mrs. Felling turned to the homemaker quite completely, and at first required unlimited giving. However, gradually she gained in adequacy, and became more capable of functioning on an adult and independent level.

This was the type of family which would not ordinarily have seemed to be a good candidate for family agency help. Yet the treatment situation was successful. Through the immediate offer of intensive counseling and the additional services provided by the agency, the family was maintained as a unity and helped to become more truly a family.

### ***Helping a Widow to Keep Her Child***

The second situation was quite different; the parent involved was rather sophisticated culturally, and in no sense deprived economically:

Mrs. Loring, a young widow, came to us for the placement of her little boy. Her husband had been ill for most of their brief marriage, and had died not long after the child's birth. Following his death, Mrs. Loring lived for a time with her in-laws, and then with her own family. She was a dependent person, who had lived at home before

her marriage and had worked only sporadically. During her marriage she had not worked, and began to contemplate some sort of career only after her husband's death.

It was very hard for Mrs. Loring to imagine herself as an independent person, working outside her home, taking on financial responsibility. She came to the placement agency with a plan to put her little boy in a foster home while she tried to find herself personally and vocationally. She did not feel able to carry the burden of motherhood while she was forced to put so much effort into learning to plan for herself. The worker recognized her as an unusually immature young woman who, in spite of good intelligence and many other assets of personality, still viewed herself as totally without worth.

It was easy to understand that Mrs. Loring felt that she had to free herself temporarily of the burden of caring for her child. On the other hand, placement is a very serious step that must have decided emotional consequences for both parent and child. As the worker helped Mrs. Loring to examine her life situation, certain unsuspected strengths emerged. Mrs. Loring chose counseling rather than placement, feeling that perhaps she did have something to offer her little boy even though there were so many other areas in which she had to concentrate. She became aware that perhaps there would be value in letting her family and in-laws help her to care for her child for a while longer, instead of placing him in order to show her ability to function independently. Mrs. Loring like the Felling family, benefited from counseling and did not have to return to the placement agency.

### ***Counseling a Young Couple***

I have described two situations in which the client was reluctant to consider separation when he was made aware of another resource. In the following situation the caseworker took a good deal of responsibility for the decision against placement.

Mr. and Mrs. Genet were a very young married couple who came to us before the birth of their child. Both of them were students, and their whole way of life was predicated on completing their education, establishing a household, and

then having a family. Mrs. Genet blamed herself for the pregnancy, since her husband's family had opposed the marriage, expressing fear that he would not complete his education once he had a wife to plan for. Mrs. Genet seemed to feel that by placing the baby she would show her husband that she placed his interests above everything else, and that she truly would never be a burden to him. Mr. Genet appeared extremely immature and quite unprepared for parenthood. He seemed to have viewed marriage as a form of "going steady." He had wanted to have companionship and physical satisfaction with one person, but had not actually conceived of himself as a husband, much less as a father.

Both these young people were most unready to assume responsibility for a child. In every way but intellectually they were still children themselves. However, they were a married couple, and they had families who, although disapproving of the pregnancy, felt obligated to help with the problem both financially and practically. We therefore considered most seriously how they could best be helped toward maturity.

Both seemed to feel that placement was the only answer for them. They expected to place the baby for about two years; during this time they would both become better able to assume their responsibilities. They would finish school and set up a home and Mr. Genet would get help with his emotional problems, which had become intensified during this period. After that, they would have their baby with them—miraculously still a new born infant—and they would all live happily ever after.

They could not understand the worker's question as to whether they could manage to do some of these things, even if not all of them, and have their baby with them. It was true that they would like to be like their friends, young and unencumbered, but this could not be a reality for them any longer. Very soon they would have a child. Life had not waited for the ideal moment, and there were serious implications to their denial of parenthood. Was it really true that Mr. Genet could not study if the baby cried, could not undertake therapy if he had the distractions of adjustment to the baby?



Although the couple continued to express their wish for placement, the worker felt grave doubt as to whether the agency would be acting in their best interests in offering it to them when they had never experienced life with their child. She suggested that instead they plan to take the baby home for a limited period of time, and see whether with intensive counseling they could come to a decision on a more solid base. Impressed by her conviction, they decided to go ahead with this plan.

The following months had many ups and downs for both the Genets and the two agencies. At various points it seemed that they could not sustain themselves through the natural difficulties and the many adjustments of parenthood under such trying circumstances. Once they even questioned their marriage, and their feeling for each other. They had been quite happy when they lived together almost as boy friend and girl friend, with no responsibilities. But they did not find it as easy to be a wife and a husband, a mother and a father. Although it became apparent that both had many deep-rooted problems, this family also moved toward a resolution of their difficulties, and have not returned to the placement agency.

### ***Situations Unsited to Counseling***

I would now like to discuss some of the types of situations which we felt were not suitable for counseling. The first category consisted of cases coming to the attention of the Children's Court because of parental neglect. With the rarest of exceptions, these are situations in which the community must protect children from parental inadequacy, and the placement agency can be most helpful by reinforcing the court decision.

A second group which would not be considered suitable for help at home were those cases which had already been treated by a family or guidance agency. While it is possible that people treated unsuccessfully at one point in their lives might be much more responsive at some other period, we decided that we would not repeat a recent treatment process without very strong indication that it could be of value.

A third type of case which we would exclude was one in which the existing pathology of parent or child made counseling undesirable. For example, we have observed that cases of fear of school usually do not lend themselves to treatment in the home. If a child is so removed from social realities that he cannot even attend school, the adult world should not give tacit approval to his behavior by having him remain at home while he attempts to work out his problems. When children of this type are placed in a residential treatment center they almost always attend school immediately and continue to do so with very little subsequent difficulty. The basic anxiety is in relation to separation from the parent. Once this is achieved the particular symptom is not too important and the child can give it up with relative ease.

I think, too, that we should not encourage treatment in the home but should emphasize the need for separation when the relationship between parent and child has already developed destructive characteristics—for example, where there is sexual stimulation or physical violence.

Here is a case which typifies this last category:

The Baines were separated and the mother cared for the three children. The father was a totally inadequate person who reportedly had been sexually provocative to the little girl. The mother, a very disturbed woman, had been known to a family agency for some time, and had been receiving psychiatric care and homemaker service. However, she seemed to be deteriorating and was becoming increasingly uncontrolled in her behavior toward the children. This woman needed to be helped to separate from her children, rather than to continue with them. Since her husband opposed placement and was anxious for her to continue to care for the children, both the placement agency and the family agency encouraged her to take him to court, where the judge ordered the placement despite the father's objection.

### ***In Conclusion***

After several years, we are now in a position to assess some of the results of the Tri-

Agency Project. A committee representing the three agencies has met continuously during this period to facilitate the plan and to evaluate progress. There has been no doubt of the value of the experiment. It has illustrated most graphically that no agency can alone give its best service to the community. Agencies are interdependent and clients can benefit from the interdependence.

Being able to offer the client an immediate alternative to placement has been of great value to our workers. Although many clients do not have the inner resources to avail themselves of the choice, it has helped them to know that they are not being trapped into

this serious decision of placement, that there is another way of approaching their difficulties. Thus even where separation has been the ultimate solution, the existence of the project has been a helpful casework tool.

Through the Tri-Agency Project both agencies have also gained in diagnostic clarity. Through working together on this project, all three agencies have become much more aware of how and when a family can be strengthened, and when it is best to help parent and child to live apart. Participation in the project has been a growth experience for the agencies, and has unquestionably offered a service of value to the client.

## CONFERENCE CALENDAR—1960

### Eastern Regional Conference

February 4, 5, 6  
Sheraton Hotel, Philadelphia, Penna.  
*Chairman:* Miss Elizabeth S. Townsend, Executive Director  
Children's Bureau of Delaware, Inc.  
1310 Delaware Avenue  
Wilmington 6, Delaware

### Central Regional Conference

March 10, 11, 12  
Dayton-Biltmore Hotel, Dayton, Ohio  
*Chairman:* Miss Katharine J. Dunn, Case Consultant  
Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati  
217 North Ludlow Street  
Dayton 2, Ohio

### Midwest Regional Conference

March 21, 22, 23  
Leamington Hotel, Minneapolis, Minnesota  
*Chairman:* Callman Rawley, Executive Director  
Jewish Family & Children's Service  
404 South Eighth Street  
Minneapolis 4, Minnesota

### South Pacific Regional Conference

April 7, 8, 9  
Statler Hotel, Los Angeles, California  
*Chairman:* Mrs. Barbara Costigan  
Supervisor, Day Care Department  
Children's Bureau of Los Angeles  
2824 Hyans Street  
Los Angeles 26, California

### Northwest Regional Conference

April 20, 21, 22  
Sheraton Hotel, Portland, Oregon  
*Chairman:* Miss Elizabeth Goddard  
Supervisor of Staff Development  
State Public Welfare Commission  
1400 S.W. Fifth Avenue  
Portland 1, Oregon

### Southern Regional Conference

April 28, 29, 30  
George Vanderbilt Hotel and  
Battery Park Hotel, Asheville, North Carolina  
*Chairman:* Miss Myrtle P. Wolff, Director  
Division of Child Welfare  
State Board of Public Welfare, P. O. Box 2599  
Raleigh, North Carolina

### Southwest Regional Conference

May 8, 9, 10, 11  
Statler-Hilton Hotel, St. Louis, Missouri  
*Chairman:* Daniel J. Sullivan, Commissioner  
Children's Services of St. Louis  
Civil Courts Building  
St. Louis 1, Missouri

### New England Regional Conference

May 26, 27, 28  
Poland Spring House, Poland, Maine  
*Chairman:* Miss Janice Bowen, Executive Director  
Child and Family Services  
187 Middle Street  
Portland, Maine

### National Conference on Social Welfare

June 5-10  
Ambassador Hotel, Atlantic City, New Jersey  
*Chairman:* Miss E. Elizabeth Glover, Executive Director  
Maryland Children's Aid Society, Inc.  
5-7 West 29th Street  
Baltimore 18, Maryland

# HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FOSTER CARE PROJECT: PART III\*†

## 1. THE LEGAL SYSTEM AND CHILD PLACEMENT

**Margaret Purvine**

Field Work Supervisor in Charge  
of Admissions  
School of Social Welfare  
University of California, Berkeley

*How statutes and their interpretation reflect attitudes affecting children in foster care.*

By "LEGAL SYSTEM" we mean not only the laws relating to child placement, but also the attitudes and actions of those who put these laws into effect. For each community we studied the way in which a child might come into placement through court action and also the legal status of each child in our sample. We realize that the legal influence on child placement is only one of a number of influences, and while we tried to isolate it, it was interrelated with others and not operating in isolation.

As one part of our total study, we collected the laws governing children's placement, at first in the field in order to be able to place children in the proper categories of legal status. Later we studied the laws in more detail and on a comparative basis as we analyzed the data collected in the field.

Our total study was not primarily a legal one, and we did not try to look at every law which might have influenced children's placement, but in each community we separated certain sections of the law which we thought would have the most direct influence on where and how children might move in and out of foster care. These sections were the ones which governed the temporary removal of children from their families; those which put restrictions on their placement after their removal; ones which related to permanent removal of such children; and laws relating to adoption. Besides these, we included any other laws which our study of individual

case records or interviews with agency or community representatives showed up as a possible influence on placement. In one community this might be an Aid to Dependent Children law which put so many restrictions on giving aid to children in their home that it made foster care an easier means of getting financial support for certain children; or a law which gave considerable protection to unmarried mothers and encouraged agency, rather than unprotected, adoption.

### *How Laws Were Put into Effect*

But the laws themselves were not the total legal system affecting children in placement. To find out how the laws were put into effect, we interviewed certain individuals in each community. One of these was the juvenile court judge, who had final responsibility for removing a child from his parents and placing him in foster care by a legal process without his parents' consent. When other legal figures were frequently mentioned as involved in this process, we interviewed them in order to provide an additional legal point of view. We considered it especially important to talk with such people, since much of our other information on this subject came from child welfare agency representatives who were not legally trained and ordinarily expressed the agency point of view. In one community, this supplementary legal point of view came from an attorney who was known as a frequent defender of parents in juvenile court when the welfare department asked the court to find that the children had been neglected. In another community, it was the district attorney, who had the responsibility for screening the cases to be presented to the juvenile court.

In each community, as part of our schedule for interviewing executives of the agen-

\* Research in Foster Care was financed completely by the Field Foundation, Inc. and administered by the Child Welfare League of America. A book-length report, *Children in Need of Parents*, is being published by Columbia University Press in late November.

† The following papers were given at the National Conference on Social Welfare, CWIA, San Francisco, on May 28, 1959.

cies caring for the children studied, we asked them what they saw as the legal influences on children's placement—what laws or interpretations might facilitate or impede the appropriate placement of children. We also acquired additional information from such other people in the community as religious representatives, school officials, and others who saw the legal system from different vantage points.

In securing this information, we tried to elicit the personal and professional philosophy of the persons involved in making decisions on the placement of children. In looking at the legal process by which children might move in and out of foster care, we also tried to assess the distance between the various people responsible for children's placement, particularly between those in the more purely legal aspects of placement and those in the administration of placement and other child welfare services.

### ***Significant Aspects of Legal Systems***

Once we had gathered this information—certain laws relating to child placement and the philosophies and actions of the people who put them into effect—we put together for each community a picture of the legal system relating to child placement and then compared it with our other communities. The myriad details of even these selected laws in the nine different communities would have permitted almost endless analysis. However, we tried to select those dimensions which seemed to point up most effectively the differences in legal systems which influenced adoption practices. They were necessarily pictured in rather broad terms.

The principal dimension with which we were concerned was whether the legal systems of these communities put emphasis upon the protection of children's rights or parents' rights. We recognized that these rights were not completely antithetical, and that protection of one without the other was a contradiction, but we saw the legal systems of our communities stretching along a continuum with the main emphasis on children's or parents' rights at either end.

We anticipated certain consequences in child placement from laws which emphasized one of these rights more than the other. We thought that if children's rights were emphasized, there would probably be a greater percentage of children in foster homes and institutions and in adoption, and fewer who had returned home from foster care; that more children would have been separated from their parents on an involuntary basis; that they would have been separated at an earlier age; that the causes of separation might include a higher proportion of psychological factors than purely physical or social factors; and that the children might spend a longer time in foster care.

Because we were describing a total legal system rather than just the laws or the juvenile court judge, we also considered other aspects which might show the relative influence of the laws, the judge and perhaps the agency representatives. We thought that dividing the legal system into its component parts would reveal how the completeness and consistency of the laws—or the degree to which they overlapped, conflicted or left certain areas untouched—affected the degree of direction they gave the judge. His influence, and thus the importance of his personal philosophy, would therefore vary. The formula which emerged was: The better the laws define the judge's role, the less apparent would be the judge's personal influence as either children's or parents' champion.

We also tried to determine how closely allied were the more strictly legal influence represented by the judge and the more welfare-oriented influence represented by the agencies. We anticipated that the amount of contact court and agencies had with each other, or the knowledge each had of the other's function and philosophy, would influence the legal system.

These were some of the ways in which we examined our pictures of the legal systems of the communities. It would be impossible here to give more than a small portion of our findings on the legal status and other characteristics of the children and the legal sys-



tems which affected them, but the following impressions will give some idea of our findings.

One obvious and striking conclusion came from the similarity of the laws in many communities, especially the juvenile court laws, and the great difference in their use. Language used was often almost identical in sections such as the one giving reasons for removing children from their parents, but the use made of these sections varied widely. In two of our paired communities, which had similar sections of the law covering this subject, one community had had no child removed by the community's own legal system for some years, while the other had a more usual share of its children removed in this way. Agency and community attitudes also had their effect, but even with this qualification it seemed obvious that interpretation and use made of the laws might make a greater difference in the way the total legal system operated in child placement than the laws themselves.

The two communities of Centralia and Jamestown are good examples of the contrast between legal systems, which represent the attempts of the communities to put into words and actions their ideas of who dependent and neglected children are and how they should be treated. These two communities are also good examples of the varying influences of the laws and the people using the laws.

### ***Emphasis on Children's Rights***

In Centralia, one of our metropolitan areas, a prosperous industrial city with surrounding farm lands, we found a law relating to children which had been written, in large part, with social agency practice in mind. We were not surprised to learn that its latest form was the result of a collaboration between social workers and attorneys and judges. The law was quite complete, and was contained almost entirely in one recently revised code. Although there were points on which the agencies and the judge might differ in interpretation, in general both agencies and attorneys could be fairly sure that the situations they encountered were covered

by the laws and that different sections did not conflict.

It seemed to us in talking with the judge and with the agency representatives that the judge's personal philosophy had less weight in the legal system because the law spelled out responsibilities and procedures. In addition, in this community's welfare structure the judge was inevitably a part of the welfare world of social agencies, which was closely allied with the legal world. For this liberal, socially conscious state, the judge was a conservative, and Central County was perhaps more conservative than some other sections of the state. But the philosophy of the state, embodied in a structure in which the welfare agencies were influential both in law and administration, made it impossible for a judge to operate on his own or to counteract the rather liberal, welfare-minded system. Even though he might not always see eye-to-eye with the agency workers, he recognized them as essential in the operations of the court system as it related to child placement and did not try to set up his own approach.

The total effect seemed to place this community toward the "children's rights" end of our continuum, though the law incorporated certain safeguards to prevent agencies from assuming judicial functions, thus tempering the otherwise strong emphasis on children rather than on the legal rights of parents.

### ***Emphasis on Parents' Rights***

In contrast, Jamestown, an old community preserving traditional customs and attitudes, protected parents' rights in a way which seemed to reach back to the philosophy of a child as a chattel. Even the deeding of children as if they were property was still permitted. But here we saw the influence of the people involved in the legal system as almost as important as the laws were themselves. The contrast between the two communities would have been even greater had not the courts in Jamestown been willing at times to stretch this unrevised set of laws to the utmost, almost making their own law to provide protection which the statutes did not give children.

In this state, the sections of law in which we were interested were scattered all through the books of statutes, and it was hard to get a clear picture of the legal process involved in child placement. Many of the statutes had been passed for specific counties by name; laws under different subject headings dealt with child placement differently; and the laws relating to child placement had not been brought up to date to take cognizance of agency practice. In certain sections, notably adoption, there were omissions which the judges might fill in as they wished, to meet problems which the statutes had not anticipated. This often led to wide variations in procedure which the laws did not specifically provide for. An omission which had the most striking influence on children's placement was the failure of the law to make any provision for permanent removal of children without their parents' consent, even when the parent had been missing for long periods of time. Unless a judge was willing to approve an adoption without parent's consent—and the law made no such exception, though it did not specify in what form consent should be given—a child might stay in temporary foster care indefinitely.

But judges did at times permit adoption without parental consent, usually on the basis of abandonment. Thus in this community and state we saw how an incomplete, uncoordinated law gave a judge considerably more opportunity for individual variation. This made the legal system somewhat more protective of children's rights, but only against the background of a law which strongly emphasized parents' rights. While influence of the social agencies on the courts was not negligible, there was not the close coordination within a well-organized structure and the long history of working together that we saw in Centralia; consequently, the emphasis remained on parents' rights rather than children's rights or protection.

### ***Differences in Placement of Children***

How did the placement of the children in these two communities reflect the differences

in their legal systems? We have already noted that our study was concerned with interrelated influences on child placement, and that the influence of the legal system could not be completely isolated. However, a few of the findings from our studies of the children's records seem to illustrate the differences we saw in the legal systems.

One of these was the distribution of the children in the various kinds of placement, such as foster care, adoption and return home. Centralia, both by law and the philosophy of those who put the law into effect, encouraged agency adoption and placed other adoptions under strict regulation. It is therefore not surprising that the proportion of the children studied who were in agency-arranged adoption was much greater in Centralia than in Jamestown, where the influence of the legal system was in the other direction. The situation was reversed with respect to the children who had returned home from foster care. Jamestown had a much higher proportion than Centralia, a finding which seemed related to the smaller proportion of children placed involuntarily in Jamestown. This in turn seemed to be based on the respective philosophies of the two legal systems—one emphasizing the protection of the community's children through court action if necessary; the other emphasizing the right of parents to place their children, and take them home again, whenever they wished.

Several other differences in the circumstances of children's placement seemed to bear some relationship to the legal systems of the two communities: Children in Centralia had been separated from their parents to go into placement at an earlier age, and they stayed longer in foster care. Both results seemed to stem from the greater emphasis on protection of children's rights.

Although the differences did not show up as strikingly in all of our paired communities, the effects of two differing legal systems were reflected in the conditions under which children were separated from their parents, their destination in placement, and their length of stay in foster care.

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## 2. NETWORK OF PLACEMENT SERVICES

**Zelma J. Felten**

Associate Director, Research in  
Foster Care

Field Consultant, Child Welfare  
League of America

*In examining a community's child-placing services,  
one needs to be mindful of the influence of inter-  
agency relationships.*

SIXTY child-placement agencies were involved directly in the nine-community study of children in foster care. We learned about them by interviewing their staff and board members and reading agency records. The agencies were variously distributed in the nine communities: One community had as few as two agencies participating in our study while another had thirteen. But we were interested in each agency, whether it was responsible for .3 percent or 90 percent of the children under study in a community.

It is extremely difficult to make categorical statements about agencies at any particular moment in time because they are changing and developing constantly. To get a community-wide picture of services, we concentrated on inter-agency relationships to learn how these networks related to the placement of children.

### **Inter-agency Relationships**

Our examination of the total picture of services involved four elements, all of which seemed to affect inter-agency relationships:

The history of the growth of services—We found that traditional ways of dealing with dependent children influenced not only patterns of services but collaboration or lack of it.

What kinds of services were offered, and to whom—To which groups in the community were services available, and how were these groups defined?

Number of staff with one year or more of professional social work training—on the assumption that agencies with a professional orientation would be more likely to have a common base on which to plan jointly for a child, and would be more likely to share common goals.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> We realize that there are other elements which affect the professional quality of an agency. However, it was difficult to measure such things as case loads for each agency since the number of children for whom one worker could be responsible varied considerably with type of service offered, kinds of children served, distances to be traveled, and other factors affecting a particular agency. Each community and agency will wish to consider such elements.

The geographical location of the agencies in relation to the community under study.

Obviously, these four elements were inter-related and figured in varying degrees in the different communities. However, as we examined the agencies and what was happening to children in placement, we found two major tendencies—a pattern tending either toward collaborative relationships or toward noncollaborative relationships.

In analyzing our data, we began with the assumption that to meet a child's changing needs, a variety of services must be available. Therefore, either he would receive service from a variety of agencies, or a variety of services from one agency. We proposed that the nature of agency relationships affected the movement of children, and that ease of referral and of joint planning were important in helping a child receive the services he needed. We also believed that agency relationships determine how planning and development of child welfare services are carried on in a community.

Before starting work in the field, we devised an agency schedule to learn about inter-agency relationships in a systematic way. It included questions directly related to this problem, in an effort to determine the points of agency interaction; the frequency and regularity of inter-agency meetings; the tone of agency relationships—collaborative, competitive, noncollaborative—the extent to which agencies shared common ideas; agency progressiveness, or ability to be forward-looking; and lastly, whether a community seemed to support all agencies or just some agencies, and to what degree. We had other means of judging inter-agency relationships—through our roster of cases that showed which were shared, and through information from agencies—gathered in interviews with agency board members, agency executives

and staff members at all levels—about how they saw themselves in the community and how they viewed other agencies. Thus, we began our analysis with systematic information and opinions from each agency.

You have read about the two communities of Jamestown and Centralia—described first as communities and then in terms of their legal systems. Now, let us consider the pattern of services or agency networks in these communities. Perhaps you could make certain predictions about the kinds of networks one might find in Jamestown and Centralia. In Jamestown, a network composed of thirteen agencies was involved directly in our study. Five were located within the county boundaries, and the other eight outside. In Centralia, we had a network of eight agencies equally divided between those inside the county and those outside.<sup>2</sup> How do these communities compare?

### ***A Pattern of Noncollaboration***

Jamestown is a very old community, with Southern tradition and a history of which it is extremely proud. The history of services proved to have a particular impact on the services existing at the time of our study. We involved the largest number of agencies encountered in any community, but found that very few had relationships with each other. Of the 154 possible relationships,<sup>3</sup> only three were in evidence. This did not mean a complete absence of communication or collaboration, but rather it was so occasional that it could not be said to indicate a pattern.

If we consider the history of services in relation to the network we find a long history of public and private services growing up together, although the emphasis, since 1790,

has been on institutional care. In short, we found an early assumption of public responsibility for children's care, but it did not preclude the growth of services established by other groups. This community, with its two distinct segments of population to be served, established services for Negro children only at the turn of the twentieth century. The history of services reflected also the other evidence of community segmentation which has been previously described. Services were established, largely on a sectarian basis, to provide institutional care. In fact, foster family services were introduced in the early 1900's.

The advent of broad public services under the Social Security Act changed this picture somewhat, since these were foster family services, nonsectarian and available to people of all races. However, at the time of the study, we found that the emphasis was still on institutional care and on agencies offering a single service. Eight of the agencies involved in our network offered only institutional care. In addition, one agency offered institutional as well as foster family care, but the institution program was much the larger. Another agency offered only adoption services; three offered foster family care and adoption services.

With only three inter-agency relationships in evidence, one can see that the agencies provided largely parallel services, usually a single type of placement offered according to the *religion* of the child, his *race*, his *residence* or his *age*. With the services lacking variety and limited to very specific groups, there was little occasion for agency collaboration on the basis of joint case planning, or in relation to common child welfare problems.

Were these agencies different in terms of professional training? In Jamestown, we seemed to have a greater proportion of agencies with no trained staff than in any other community. The range was from 0 percent to 100 percent. Only two agencies had 100 percent trained staff, while seven had no trained staff. The four others fell somewhere in between. This disparity in professional

<sup>2</sup> It should be said here that the agencies participating in the study were those which were serving children either in or from the community under study on April 1, 1957. There might have been other placement resources available, but if they were not serving children on our study date, they did not participate in the project.

<sup>3</sup> There were seventy-seven possible relationships for joint planning about cases and another seventy-seven possible relationships for consideration of child welfare issues.



levels re-enforced the pattern of noncollaboration.

As we mentioned earlier, geographic distances may have some bearing on the noncollaborative nature of an inter-agency network. While it is not always a vital factor in determining inter-agency relationships, where services are spread geographically and where there is little collaboration, as in Jamestown, agency distance from each other does seem to re-enforce other factors making for noncollaboration.

### *A Pattern of Collaboration*

Centralia presented considerable contrast to Jamestown in many ways. It has been described as a homogeneous "typically American" community—one where interdependence among groups was stressed and where solutions to problems were sought on a cross-community basis.

As one might anticipate, the agency network in Centralia, a complex one considering the number of agencies involved, was an essentially collaborative one. The relationships among agencies were on the matter of issues and for joint planning about cases. The network in Centralia showed rather a distinctive balance. There were four agencies within the community and four in a nearby metropolitan community. Four were sectarian and four nonsectarian. All of the agencies located outside the community served the entire state.

Collaboration occurred among all agencies; none was isolated. Communication was based mainly on joint planning for children. Although four agencies served sectarian groups, they had little hesitation in making referrals to another agency which had a service better suited to a particular child.

Communication concerned with over-all planning and common problems seemed to be related closely to agency location. The four agencies within Centralia participated in discussion of local problems, while the four outside Centralia seemed to focus on statewide issues. In this way, geographical loca-

tion of the agencies appeared to influence collaboration.

Does history contribute to the collaborative picture? The oldest agency in Centralia was established in 1868. It was originally an institution, and only recently broadened its program to include foster family care. However, as early as 1896 a sectarian agency was organized specifically to offer foster family care. Therefore, we have, as a part of Centralia's tradition, two kinds of services growing up side by side. Both of these were private agency services, but between 1920 and 1936 all of the other agencies—public and private—were organized. Except for the two oldest agencies then, public and private services developed together.

We found that not only was there a tradition of a variety of services offered by separate agencies, but there were only two single-service agencies in the group of eight. Of the other six agencies, three offered foster family, institution and adoption services, and the others offered various combinations of these, but all provided at least two kinds of services. Thus, in all agencies, we have a variety of services under one roof, as well as a tradition of a variety of services for the total community.

When we examined the percentage of staff with some professional training, we found, in contrast to Jamestown, that in all agencies in Centralia, 33 percent to 100 percent of staff had professional training. In three of the eight agencies, 100 percent of staff was trained, and in one agency 94 percent of staff. The professional nature of these agencies and the common focus on services to meet certain problems seemed to lead toward inter-agency referral and joint planning.

### *The Influence of the Social System*

These contrasts in organization of placement services were reflected in the experiences of children in placement, as Dr. Engler and Miss Purvine have pointed out. In the interest of time, I will not describe these differences further, except to say that in Jamestown our evidence indicated a con-

tinued belief that services should be provided by separate groups for "their own," while in Centralia an attempt was made to gear professional services to the variety of problems presented by dependent children and their families, regardless of the client's race or religion.

Although we have used Centralia and Jamestown as examples, we found the same characteristics in other communities to some degree. In other words, the organization of services seems to reflect the social system of the total community. Where interdependence among groups predominates, the organization of services is likely to be a collaborative one, with a variety of placement services and communication among agencies. Definitions of dependent children to be served are likely to be broader, with a growing emphasis on the problems presented.

Where a tradition of separateness and emphasis on independence is predominant, we are likely to find a greater proportion of segmented services, operating on a noncollaborative basis. Noncollaboration and non-professionalism tend to go together. The picture of child placement associated with agency noncollaboration—including a smaller proportion of children moving into adoptive homes—has been suggested in the previous presentations on the communities and their legal systems.

## READERS' FORUM

### *Casework with the Unmarried Mother*

*To the Editor:*

I am writing to express my hope that the papers on "Problems of Repeated Out-of-Wedlock Pregnancies" in the June issue of *CHILD WELFARE* are the first of a series of technical articles on various aspects of casework treatment of the unmarried mother.

Our private agency serves many "repeaters" and, when we are candid, we can say that for the most part our main service has been the placement of their babies. We recognize that the early surrender of these children is a valid service to their mothers, but one cannot help but question this as the main aspect of treatment.

To me, the most tantalizing part of Miss Levitt's paper was the sentence describing the client to be "intelligent, responsible, cooperative and *highly* motivated" (page 6, paragraph 5). We have many clients who could be described by the first three adjectives, but we rarely meet one who can be thought of as "highly motivated."

By and large, our repeating unmarried mothers act out their conflicts. They are non-verbal. When they do use words to communicate (instead of action), we find that their primary defenses are denial and withdrawal. Thus, our most urgent technical problem lies in finding a means of communication with them. They elude us at every turn and appear only to tolerate casework service in relation to plans for their infants.

We are continuously evaluating our diagnostic understanding of these women and the methods we use in attempting to help them with their conflicts, but we would welcome the interchange of ideas from other caseworkers who share our professional discomfort and who have ideas about how to reach the poorly motivated unmarried mother.

MARGARET BOOTHBY

*Director of Casework,  
Family Service Society, Akron, Ohio*

### AUTHOR'S REPLY

*To the Editor:*

The problem that Miss Boothby raises is one that deeply concerns all agencies who work with the unmarried mother group of disturbed, acting-out clients.

I have found that an increasing number of these clients with limited motivation can be helped to become more highly motivated if we know how to help them and can handle our own frustration when they "reject" us and our offer of help.

Most unmarried mothers come to the agency (or are forced to come) with the feeling that we cannot possibly be interested in them but only in getting their babies. Some have verbalized this with intense hostility. With this as a clue we, in our agency, have directly focused our interviews on the mother and her problem from the point of intake. This first contact is of prime importance, and so frequently will determine whether this will become an on-going rela-

relationship or will be cut off by the client. It is also our practice to see the unmarried mother first and alone, and other family members who may have accompanied her later. The client helps decide whether she should be present at this interview. Thus she is given concrete evidence of the worker's interest in her.

Since an early discussion of plans for the baby can so readily be used by the client as a defense against facing her basic problems, such discussion (except in a crisis situation) is discouraged until client and worker get to know each other better. We explain to the client that the worker is interested in her and that the baby is only a part of her problem.

This may seem to be a simple and obvious casework device, but we arrived at it only after considerable observation of new workers' initial reaction to these clients. Their anxiety about securing the surrender of the baby was quickly sensed by the client, who reacted with a feeling of non-worth and rejection. Guilt and anxiety were thus increased rather than allayed.

The worker must not only understand this dynamically but must have a real feeling of empathy for the client in order to convey the feeling of worth to her. Furthermore the worker's acceptance must be conveyed in manner and tone as well as in words in the initial interviews, so that she becomes to the client the one person whose non-judgmental attitude can be trusted.

At times the worker must become more active in the early interviews, as a more passive approach at this stage can be interpreted by the client as lack of interest, or rejection. When appointments are broken, the client may be testing out the extent of the worker's interest, and the latter needs to reach out to express her concern for her. In some instances a home visit can be very effective. Some workers are at first troubled by this kind of reaching out, but with experience can accept it as a therapeutic casework device, particularly when they see evidence of its effectiveness.

I certainly do not wish to give the impression that we have found the answer to this knotty problem, but even a very small beginning in breaking through to these elusive clients should encourage more experimental

tion. I heartily agree with Miss Boothby that we must not allow ourselves to become frustrated but must search for new approaches to them. Above all we must not allow our own sense of frustration to be communicated to the client, knowing that she may take this to mean that there is no help for her.

ESTHER G. LEVITT

Department Supervisor, Unmarried Mother Services,  
Louise Wise Services, NYC

### **Vermont's New Adoption Legislation**

*To the Editor:*

Attorney Polier's article describes New York's new law releasing "permanently neglected children" for adoption as a challenge to child welfare workers, and an opportunity for New York's "orphans of the living."

I would hope that caseworkers would be more ready and eager to take advantage of the law than perhaps Mr. Polier anticipates. However, even if social workers' attitudes and philosophy have been more in line with the new law than the author suggests, their failure to take aggressive action and rouse public concern for the plight of these children has left them open to the criticism he implies.

The general acceptance of and public interest in adoption has stimulated examination and revision of adoption laws in many states. The 1959 Vermont Legislature passed two amendments to the adoption law which were sponsored by the Vermont Conference of Social Welfare. A committee of the conference has studied the adoption law for four years. A general revision was considered, but in the face of opposition in the community, and some difference of opinion within the conference, the committee only recommended two amendments which seemed to have general acceptance and a possibility of passing. Representatives of the four Vermont agencies making adoption placements served on the State Conference committee, and appeared in favor of the amendments at the Senate hearing.

Effective July 1, 1959, parents' surrenders must be adjudicated in Probate Court, the court which handles adoption in Vermont. The law states that "an order relating to the termination of parental rights shall be made

in all cases. . . . In the event of the termination of parental rights no withdrawal of such relinquishment or surrender will thereafter be allowed."

The second amendment permits the issuing of a final decree of adoption after the child has been in the home six months, instead of the one year minimum previously required.

The confidentiality important to unmarried mothers wishing to surrender their children is maintained by giving them a choice of Probate districts, and by the use of a waiver to be signed by the mother who does not wish to appear in court.

Although the rights of the natural parents were considered and discussed in the legislative hearing, the newspaper publicity when the legislation was pending, and after passage, emphasized the adjudication of the surrender and the reduction of the probationary period as a benefit and protection for adoptive parents.

Release of children without parental consent has been, and will continue to be, handled in the Juvenile Courts. The changes made in Vermont are not revolutionary, but will give children and their new parents the security that agency adoptions are supposed to provide.

JULIA E. HATCH  
*Acting Executive Secretary,  
Vermont Children's Aid Society, Inc.*

## NEWS FOR THE FIELD

### ***Internal Revenue Code Amended— For Children Placed for Adoption***

ON SEPTEMBER 23, 1959, President Eisenhower approved a bill which helps to cure an inequity which our income tax laws have placed upon adopters. Public Law 86-376 more closely aligns the tax treatment of parents adopting a child, for the first year the child is in the home, with treatment of parents of a child who is born to them.

Before the amendment, persons taking a child into their home for adoption, for example on January 2nd of the calendar year, could not claim the \$600 exemption for income tax purposes for the child—even

though they supported the child for practically the entire year—unless either an interlocutory or final decree of adoption were obtained in the same year. In some states it is difficult or impossible to obtain a final decree of adoption within a year, and most of the states do not have any procedure for obtaining an interlocutory decree of adoption. But parents who have a child *born to them* on the last day of their taxable year—for example, on December 31st—are allowed the \$600 exemption just as if they had supported the child for the entire year.

The problem was sharpened because of an amendment to the Internal Revenue Code in 1954 relating to those individuals whose support would entitle a taxpayer to claim a \$600 exemption. Under this earlier amendment, a taxpayer was allowed to claim an exemption for the support of an individual who "for the taxable year of the taxpayer" had his principal residence in the taxpayer's house and was a member of his household. The Commissioner of Internal Revenue interpreted "for the taxable year of the taxpayer" to mean the *entire* taxable year. The Commissioner's position was upheld by the Tax Court, and the taxpayer was denied the exemption.

Thus the issue arose only for the first year in which the child was placed in the home for adoption. For the next year, the 1954 amendment took care of the problem since the child was in the taxpayer's house for the entire taxable year. Public Law 86-376 solves this first year problem. It grants an exemption for a

"child who is a member of an individual's household, if placed with such individual by an authorized placement agency for legal adoption by such individual."

The requirement that the child be placed by an authorized placement agency would seem to mean that the placement must be through an agency authorized by the state in which it operates or by some other local governmental authority. Accordingly, the new legislation provides an incentive for state or local control of adoption agencies where such control—perhaps through licensing laws—does not now exist. As of July, 1956, eleven states did not have licensing laws relating to the regulation of adoption agencies.

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## BOOKS

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While the new legislation brings a child placed in a home for adoption within the definition of a dependent for whom an exemption is available, the additional test of support must still be met. In the case of an exemption for any dependent, the taxpayer must, in general, have *supplied over half of the support*. Under Treasury Department regulations, the term *support* includes "food, shelter, clothing, medical and dental care, and the like." Accordingly, it may be difficult for persons adopting a child in the latter part of a calendar year to establish that they supplied over half his support when, for example, the child has spent a substantial part of the year in a foster home.

Finally, it should be noted that the provisions of Public Law 86-376 apply only to taxable years beginning after December 31, 1958. Accordingly, taxpayers who were unable to claim an exemption for a child taken into their home for adoption for an earlier year are not granted retroactive relief.

## BOOK NOTES

**Eduard C. Lindeman and Social Work Philosophy**, by Gisela Konopka. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press. 220 pp. \$4.50.

In *Eduard C. Lindeman and Social Work Philosophy* Gisela Konopka offers not so much a detailed biography of this inspired teacher, but the story of his professional life and work, as it paralleled the development of social work during the first half of the twentieth century, with particular attention to changing goals and values.

Deeply influenced by William James and John Dewey, Eduard Lindeman early reached "the conviction that the social sciences needed supplementation from philosophy, especially that branch of philosophy which was striving to align itself with scientific method, namely American Pragmatism or Instrumentalism." No armchair pragmatist, Lindeman's particular genius as philosopher, as social scientist and social worker was his ability to translate democratic principles and values into formulas and propositions for action. In his first book, *The Community*, published in 1921, Lindeman already displayed his gift for wedding philosophy with practice. In it he outlined a method based on

the democratic process to be used in community organization. "If Democracy cannot be applied to the problems of the smaller local community, how futile it is to speak of it as a national or international ideal." It is significant, in this connection, that in *The Community* Lindeman criticizes Tolstoy for running away from the problems of the modern community when he experimented with Christianity.

Mrs. Konopka traces Lindeman's pioneering contributions not only in community organization, but also in the areas of social group work, social research and social action. He was impatient with the narrow concept that social work has the exclusive goal of rehabilitating the unadjusted individual.

"Adjusting related only to *status quo*. Social work should be a profession whose members are skilled in conditioning human behavior and who are devoted to the aims of releasing the potentialities of individuals by means which relate them to a changing and dynamic society. . . . Social work . . . would become the instrument of social justice on its lowest level and of social change on its highest."

The chapter *Goals and Values in Historical Perspective* may be of special interest to child welfare workers. In it Mrs. Konopka examines social work's changing attitudes over the past fifty years—its struggle to learn how to work *with* people, not *for* people; its movement "from a value of *charity* in the narrow sense of giving by one 'above' to one 'below,' toward the value of *justice* or equal opportunities." The chapter also touches briefly on social work's changing attitudes toward children during the first half of what has been called "the century of the child."

Mrs. Konopka's book is a welcome addition to the limited number of books on social work philosophy. Students may find that many concepts are presented and many issues touched upon too briefly. The chapter on *A Theory of Social Work* is not sufficiently integrated and possibly out of place in a book of this kind. Too scanty also is the description of Lindeman's personality so that, except in rare passages, the dynamics of the man fail to come through. Nevertheless this will be a valuable reference for those interested in the initial burgeoning years of the social work profession.

DANIEL ADELSON, Ph.D.  
California Dept. of Mental Hygiene

## CLASSIFIED PERSONNEL OPENINGS

Classified personnel advertisements are inserted at the rate of 15 cents per word; boxed ads \$7.50 per inch; minimum insertion \$3.00. Deadline for acceptance or cancellation of ads is eighth of month preceding month of publication. Ads listing box numbers or otherwise not identifying the agency are accepted only when accompanied by statement that person currently holding the job knows ad is being placed.

**LOS ANGELES**—Openings for two caseworkers with graduate training in expanding family and child welfare agency—multiple services including marital counseling, unmarried parents, financial assistance, child placement in foster home care and group care, psychiatric consultation. Highly qualified supervision. Standard personnel practices. Opportunities for advancement. Salary, \$4836-\$6656 depending on training and experience. Write: Rev. William J. Barry, Assistant Director, Catholic Welfare Bureau, 855 S Figueroa St., Los Angeles 17, Calif.

**CASEWORKER II and CASEWORK SPECIALIST** in child placement agency. Service includes intensive casework with deeply troubled parents and children, placement in full-time and day care homes. Controlled case loads, regular psychiatric consultation. Excellent personnel practices, Social Security, retirement, health insurance. Caseworker II requirements: MSW and potential of being creative. Salary \$4836-\$6036. Casework specialist requirements: MSW, experience in casework and community organization activity. The casework specialist carries, in addition to a case load, considerable administrative responsibility for the particular service or program to which he has been assigned. Salary \$5400-\$6756. Clyde S. Pritchard, Executive Secretary, Children's Bureau of Los Angeles, 2824 Hyans St., Los Angeles 26, Calif.

**CASEWORKER** (female), for County Welfare Department, located 60 miles north of Hollywood and 28 miles south of Santa Barbara. Specialize in unmarried mother case load. Master's degree in social welfare preferred, or 1 year's graduate study and 1 year's experience. Salary range: \$445-\$540 per month. Liberal benefits. Send resumé to Personnel Office, Court House, Ventura, Calif.

**CASEWORKER II or III—MSW—**(Male). In parent-child guidance service. Casework treatment oriented toward work with total family of boys aged 6-18. Work is challenging and stimulating. Minimal dictation with supervision geared toward independent practice. CWLA member. Psychiatric and psychological consultation available. Social Security and retirement, health insurance. Salary: II, \$4836-\$6036; III, \$5400-\$6756; 5-step plan. Can appoint at qualified step. Milton L. Goldberg, Executive Director, Jewish Big Brothers Association, Room 366, 590 N. Vermont Ave., Los Angeles 4, Calif.

**CHILD WELFARE SERVICES WORKER and SUPERVISOR POSITIONS** for fast growing county in southern California. Opportunities in adoption included. **WORKER I** (\$5130-\$6084) requires 1 year's graduate study in social work. **WORKER II** (\$5388-\$6384) requires 1 year's graduate study in social work and 2 years' experience or 2 years' graduate study. **SUPERVISOR** (\$5940-\$7044), requires 2 years' graduate study and 2 years' experience, 1 of which must be in child welfare. Paid vacation and sick leave, part-paid health insurance, other benefits. County Personnel, Courthouse, San Bernardino, Calif.

**CASEWORKER:** Male preferred, for expanding clinical service department in private institution serving adolescent boys with behavior problems. Requirements: MSW, psychiatric sequence preferred; supervision geared to professional maturity—psychiatric consultation. **SALARY:** \$5000 with MSW; regular increments; 1 month's vacation; Social Security, hospital and medical benefits, life insurance; lunch provided. Ideal location—1 hour from Hartford, 2½ hours from New York. Apply to Frederick E. Curtice, Director of Casework, Connecticut Junior Republic, Litchfield, Conn.

### SAN MATEO COUNTY CALIFORNIA

#### Child Welfare Supervisor II

One position supervising workers responsible for multi-service programs including Aid to Needy Children. Requires MSW plus 4 years' experience. \$6972-\$8700.

#### Social Worker IV or V

One position in foster home-finding and studying homes for children. One position studying independent adoptions. One position in newly developed Protective Services Unit. One position in general medical, surgical hospital of 255 beds affiliated with Stanford School of Medicine. Two positions in chronic disease and generic field in County facilities for chronically ill. Social Worker IV \$5568-\$6972 requires MSW. Social Worker V \$6228-\$7788 requires MSW plus 3 years' experience.

#### Social Worker III

One position in select Aid to Needy Children caseload. Requires one year graduate study in social work. \$5268-\$6588. Write Harold E. Simmons, Supt. Social Services, 225-37th Avenue, San Mateo, California.

**CHILDREN'S CASEWORKER** in rapidly expanding multiple-function, sectarian agency. Master's degree. Adoption, foster care, child guidance predominant program. Member CWLA. Salary range \$4800-\$6600. Contact Dr. A. M. Neumann, Jewish Family and Children's Service, 314 14th St., Denver 2, Colo.